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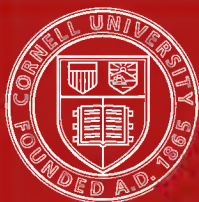
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[Collectanea Adamantæa.]

MEMOIRS OF THE BASTILLE.

*Of this edition only 75 large-paper and 275 small-paper
copies are printed for subscribers.*

COLLECTANEA ADAMANTÆA.—IV.

MEMOIRS
OF
THE BASTILLE.

Translated from the French
OF THE CELEBRATED
MR. LINGUET,
WHO WAS IMPRISONED THERE FROM
SEPTEMBER 1780, TO MAY 1782.

Edited by
EDMUND GOLDSMID, F.R.H.S.

VOL. I.

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MEMOIRS OF THE BASTILLE.

Containing a FULL EXPOSITION of the
MYSTERIOUS POLICY
AND
DESPOTIC OPPRESSION
OF THE
FRENCH GOVERNMENT,
In the INTERIOR ADMINISTRATION of
THAT STATE - PRISON.
Interspersed with a Variety of
CURIOUS ANECDOTES.

*Non, mihi si voces centum sint, oraque centum
Omnia pœnarum percurrere nomina possim. VIRG.*

Translated from the FRENCH of
The Celebrated Mr. *LINGUET*,
Who was imprisoned there
From *September, 1780, to May 1782.*

DUBLIN:
PRINTED BY J. A. HUSBAND,
FOR
Messrs. H. and W. WHITESTONE, WILSON, MONCRIEFFE,
WALKER, BURNET, WHITE, EXSHAW, BYRNE,
BURTON, CASH, SLEATER, Junior,
and PARKER.

M,DCC,LXXXIII.





Advertisement

BY THE

TRANSLATOR.



HIS work was wanting to the nomenclature of real *State-Crimes*; that is, of the sacrifices made by Despotism to the passions of its agents.

The Author, Mr. LINGUET, was for ten years one of the most distinguished Counsellors of the Parliament of *Paris*. He shone equally in oratory and composition. It has been remarked, that of a hundred and thirty Causes, all of them important, in which he had engaged during that period, he lost only nine. His enemies attributed this unparalleled success to the charms of his eloquence; his more candid judges, to the delicacy which directed him in the choice of his suits.

Whilst Mr. *Linguet* was thus displaying his

useful and active talents at the Bar, he employed himself likewise in the cultivation of *Polite Literature*, and *Philosophy*. The boldness of his principles, the novelty of his views, and too great a freedom in his examination of the systems established and the sects prevailing in *France*, made him powerful enemies, even in the Ministry, in that Country, where, as it is well known, there is at least as much cabal and party spirit as in our own; with this difference, that in *England* the objects are great, and the means public; whereas in *France* parties are formed and embittered for trifles, and mystery presides over intrigue.

In the revolution which some years ago interrupted all judicial order in *France*, Mr. *Linguet*, having suffered, on the part of the Parliament of *Paris*, and, ultimately, on that of Government itself, those shocking injuries of which the particulars may be seen in a work which he published three years ago, (*) sought an asylum in England. He there undertook a periodical work, intitled *Annales, Politiques, Civiles, & Littéraires du 18^{me} Siècle*; which met with a very favourable reception throughout *Europe*.

* *Appel à la Postérité*, or the first volume of the Collection of Mr. *Linguet's* Works.

This had been preceded by a printed Letter to the Count *de Vergennes*, one of the *French* Ministers, with whom he had most cause to be dissatisfied. This letter has been considered by the critics as a striking monument of energy, eloquence, and candour. It was of such a nature as to leave a deep and lasting impression on the mind ; and it was sufficiently evident that it has not failed of this effect.

At the approach of the rupture between *England* and *France*, Mr. *Linguet*, having quitted the former, through a patriotic delicacy which has been regretted, though not censured, by the *English* ; and having persuaded himself, that on the *parole* of the Count *de Vergennes* he might go to *France* to prosecute his interests there ; he was arrested, on the 27th of *September* 1780, by virtue of a *Lettre-de-cachet*, and conducted to the *Bastille*, where he remained full twenty months. ✓

This work contains the history of his imprisonment, that of the proceedings of those Ministers who have been accomplices in it, and a description of the regimen of that infernal mansion, equally celebrated and dreaded, but at the same time as little known as it is formidable.



MEMOIRS OF THE BASTILLE.

PART I.*

London, Dec. 5, 1782.



Am now in *England*: it is necessary to prove that my return hither has been a measure absolutely indispensable.—I am no longer at the *Bastille*: it is necessary to prove that I never deserved to be there. It is necessary to do more: to demonstrate that none have ever deserved it: the innocent, because they are innocent; the guilty, because they ought not to be convicted, judged, and punished, but according to the laws, and because at the

* I have been obliged to write many Notes, several of which are rather long. I have adopted the method of putting them at the end of the work in the form of Appendices, referring to them by corresponding figures. This method is less distracting to the Reader.

Bastille none of the laws are observed, or rather they are all violated ; because there are no tortures, unless perhaps in the infernal regions, which will bear to be set in competition with those of the *Bastille* ; and because, if the institution itself may in certain cases admit of justification, it is impossible, in any case whatever, to justify the *regimen* of it.—It is necessary to shew that this regimen, no less disgraceful than cruel, is equally repugnant to all the principles of justice and humanity, to the manners of the Nation, to the mildness which characterises the Royal House of *France*, and especially to the goodness, the equity of the Sovereign who at present fills the throne.

It is by this discussion that I am going to consecrate the renewal of my toils, my return to my painful career.

The two first articles seem to be merely personal, to concern none but myself. It will be seen however that they are inseparably connected with the third, and that they make an essential part of it. They form altogether a series of oppressions, a chain of iniquities and grievances, of which most assuredly very few instances are to be found since the History of Job.

Should I, in a word, be thought worthy to treat the last article, if I did not begin by clearing up the two others? Were I a mere miserable refugee, thirsting after vengeance, or a wretched criminal branded with the ignominy of a pardon, what weight would my claims, however urgent, carry with them?

But, after having seen the proofs of my innocence, the world will be more sensibly struck with the picture of those horrors from which that innocence has been insufficient to preserve me: their concern will still increase, when they reflect that there is not a *Frenchman*, nor even a Foreigner of those who visit the kingdom of *France*, who can assure himself that he shall not one day, in his own person experience those very horrors. The *Bastilles* of *France* have devoured, they are daily devouring, men of all ranks, and of all nations. At the avenues of these abysses (1) might well be engraven that memento which is sometimes seen inscribed to transitory readers on church-yard gates: *Hodie mihi, cras tibi!*

Who, in short, can promise himself that he shall escape that fate, from which the elevated rank of presumptive Heir to the Crown has not been sufficient to secure a *Louis XII.* nor their accumulated laurels a *Condé*, (2) or a *Luxemburg*; nor virtue, nor science, a *Sacy*, and so many others; nor the affected stateliness of the Long Robe, a *Pucelle*; nor the most important public services, a *La Bourdonnaie*; nor the right of nations so many *English, Germans, Italians, &c.* whose names, engraven in fits of despondent weariness on all parts of those fatal walls, form a kind of geographic picture equally diversified and alarming, &c.? It is then, if I may use the expression, the character of an epidemic disease, formidable to all mankind, that I am going here to delineate. Notwithstanding the prodigious number

of witnesses who have involuntarily visited these dungeons, the *minutiæ* of their interior are very little known: the Memoirs of *La Porte*, of *Gourville*, of *Mme. de Staël*, give little or no information; the whole tending only to prove a fact difficult to be conceived, that in their time this *Tartarus*, compared to what it is at present, was a kind of *Elysium*.

At that time the prisoners received visits, saw each other familiarly, and took their walks together: the Officers of the *Etat-Major* talked and eat with them; they were their comforters, no less than their guardians. *La Porte* speaks, in express terms, of the LIBERTIES OF THE BASTILLE; that is the name he gives to those alleviations which we have just mentioned, and which he and all his fellow-sufferers enjoyed.

And *La Porte* speaks of the reign of the Cardinal *de Richelieu*: *La Porte* was, of all men in the kingdom, the man the least to be treated with moderation. The relentless Minister was personally interested either in despotically wresting from him a valuable secret of which he was the confidant, or in vindictively tormenting him. The *Bastille* had therefore at that time no bitter potions of which he would not have drank, no tortures which he would not have undergone. Let his description be compared with mine. (3)

How has this increase of barbarities been effected? This I know not; but woeful experience has only too well assured me of its reality. Whilst the general manners seem in all

respects to tend rather to softness than to rigour ; whilst the reigning Prince discovers no views but such as are benevolent ; whilst the sufferings even of criminal convicts have been abated, in the common prisons, by lenient regulations which his orders have produced ; the only solicitude at the *Bastille* is to multiply tortures for the affliction of the innocent. The atrociousness of cruelty has been enhanced in this, more than it has been diminished in the other prisons.

To reveal this inconceivable depravity is, under an equitable Prince, to render its reformation indispensable. Thus my last farewell to my country is an additional service which I shall render it ; my last homage to the virtuous King who rules over it, will furnish him with a new occasion of doing that good, which constituting his delight, is the first object of his pursuit.

But is there no interdict, to prohibit the disclosure I am about to make ? Can I without scruple treat the several subjects which I have engaged to discuss ? Can I *in conscience* let the public into the secret of the terrible mysteries into which the 27th of September 1780 has initiated me ?

The guardians of the *Bastille* have not indeed at their disposal the waters of *Lethe*, to cancel in the minds of their victims the remembrance of their cruelties ; but they try to find a substitute for them. Despotism, which makes silence one of the torments of the *Bastille* during the period of confinement, endeavours to make a religious

duty of it at the termination of that period. Every *Jonas* cast forth from its jaws is compelled to SWEAR, *that he will never reveal. either directly or indirectly, a tittle of what he may have learnt or suffered there.*

It is a Magistrate in the habit apparently consecrated to justice, (4) it is men of the Military order, decorated with the external badge of an honourable service, (5) and of a life devoted to the defence of the citizens, who preside at this last act of an oppression of which they have been the instruments. Shewing the captive, half-revived, the door which alone can completely restore him to life, half-open, and ready instantly to close upon him again if he hesitates; they leave him no alternative, but those of silence, perjury, or death.

O ye well-informed of every Nation, rigid casuists who know what honour and delicacy prescribe, pronounce: Because my hands have been unjustly bound, must my pen be restrained too? Certainly not: with one united voice you decide, that the infraction of that scandalous engagement is no perjury; that it is the exaction, not the violation of it, which constitutes the guilt.

You have absolved the celebrated *Dillon* for having snapped the reins that had been fabricated by a religious Inquisition, which, having precisely the same principles as this political one, employs the same resources to bury the disgrace and the scandal of them. You are unanimous in

renewing, and rendering for ever sacred, that axiom, so dear to society, that axiom, which, once forgotten, would give too unlimited a scope to miscreants armed with power, "That the institution of an oath was intended to give stability to lawful conventions ; to insure the observance of the laws ; and not to defend, or assist in perpetuating, the abuses which infringe them."



SECTION I.

My Return to England a measure of necessity.

AFTER what had passed in 1777 between the Count de *Vergennes* and me, (6) that Minister was, of all the Politicians in Europe, the one with whom I ought to have had the least concern. However, at the approach of the rupture between *France* and *England*, in March 1778, reckoning upon the reputation which he had acquired for personal delicacy and private probity, I thought I might run the risk of writing to him, to communicate to him my unwillingness to remain in a country which was going to become the enemy of my own : I requested to be informed whether, on changing my residence upon so patriotic a principle, I might not have new persecutions to apprehend from the *French* Ministry. I concluded with these words :

“ I am perfectly sensible that the present situation of affairs will not permit me to indulge the hope of immediate reparation : but my heart would rest contented with that which the Public is making me, if, in transplanting myself, I could reckon on the enjoyment of repose ; and I should reckon upon it *if I had your word of honour as a pledge.*

“ You will pardon me, after my innocence has been well, perhaps too well proved, that I think it necessary to take this precaution for my safety : but such is the misfortune of my position ; and I dare believe that you will not be displeased with me on this account. If I distrust the Ministry, you see what confidence I place in the Minister.”

The 20th of the same month, the Count *de Vergennes* answered me in these terms, “ You communicated to me, Sir, &c. The Count *de Maurepas*, to whom I have imparted it, *entirely approves the resolution* ; and he AUTHORIZES me to signify to you, that you may banish *all uneasiness on this head.* . . . I think, Sir, that under this assurance you may take such steps as you shall judge most convenient. *I would not give it to you, if I did not absolutely consider it, myself, as very certain.*”

The 7th of April following, I asked of the Count *de Vergennes* a further explanation ; I made a further sacrifice, more painful perhaps, more

noble I can say with confidence, than even that of my residence. (7) The Count *de Vergennes*, the 23d, writes me for answer: "I have received, Sir, your letter; upon which I can only confirm to you what I have signified in my last, which announces to you, as well on the part of the Count *de Maurepas*, as on my own, an ENTIRE SAFETY FOR YOUR PERSON in the new habitation which you propose to yourself. I repeat to you very cordially the assurance of it, and that of *leaving it in your option to continue your literary labours*; being well convinced that neither the *King*, *Religion*, nor the *State*, will be attacked therein."

Upon this safe-guard, solemn as we have just seen it, well authenticated, and totally unconditional, I quitted *England*. I settled at *Brussels*. I made several journeys to *France* in 1778 and 1779. I saw the Ministers. The *Annals* continued to have a circulation not less free than honourable; and I presume to say, that in no work which Literature has produced, have the *King*, *Religion*, and the *State*, been more scrupulously respected.

The 27th of Sept. 1780, however, having been inveigled to *Paris* by a series of treacherous artifices, some of which I shall instance elsewhere, I found myself arrested in broad day-light, and this with studied and complicated circumstances of ignominy; (8) plunged into dungeons which in appearance are destined exclusively for the enemies

of the *King*, or *Religion*, and of the *State*; and given up, in my person, in my honour, and in my fortune, to every indignity in which barbarous jailors, licentious calumniators, greedy prostitutes, and faithless agents, could indulge themselves.

At the expiration of twenty months, without any kind of mitigation or explanation, my captivity apparently ended on the 19th of May 1782; when in reality it only assumed a different form. The Lieutenant-general of the Police of *Paris*, coming with great parade to announce to me that I was no longer a *prisoner*, signified to me that I was *exiled*: he delivered me an order which banished me to a little town at the distance of forty leagues from *Paris*, with a prohibition to depart from it ON PAIN OF DISOBEDIENCE.

Though they did not deign to be more explicit on the motive of my *exile* than on that of my *imprisonment*; though I had the greatest reason to believe that this recent blow was levelled by the Ministry, not by the King, I submitted to it without demur. I asked only two favours very simple: the one, permission to stay at *Paris*, at least till I should have recovered strength sufficient to remove from it, and have drawn what was necessary for my subsistence out of hands more than suspicious, which by strange manœuvres were become possessed of almost all my property; the other, to go to spend some days at *Brussels*, in order to put an end to the confusion which for two years past had been mouldering away the rest of my fortune.

I ought the rather to have hoped for a compliance with these two requests, as the disorder I had to remedy proceeded directly from the *French* Ministry. They had caused to be *ministerially* demanded at *Brussels*, in the name of the *King of France*, by the *Chargé-d'affaires* of *France*, (9) seconded by an Exempt of the Police of *Paris*, (10) and by a Deputy whom I shall elsewhere name (11) the remittance not only of *my papers*, but of *my money*: and what they did not carry away, they dissipated. They paid, at my expence, the travelling expences of the Under-minister, (12) of the Exempt in chief, of the Exempt *en second*: they paid a guard, whose service consisted in pillaging. under pretence of preserving: they paid the Officers of the country, eager to dispute with the foreign Officers the property of which they were despoiling me; and *French* injustice was lavish of my money towards the justice of *Brabant*.

Having, moreover, on the recovery of my existence, a new present to make to my country; having to give experimental proof of an invention extremely valuable; to realise, for public utility, a project I had devised for rendering the light subservient to a purpose yet unknown, and that at a time when my eyes were strangers to it; the confidence with which I expected the modification, nay the revocation of my exile, was certainly not ill-founded.

Curiosity procured me a short respite on the first point; and it was not left ungratified. I made the experiment; it succeeded. (13) That

very day, I received the injunction, *Depart for Rethel, and stir not thence*; though, in order to obtain permission to go to *Brussels*. I would have pledged myself, verbally, and in writing, to return immediately; though for a month past I had incessantly renewed the promise, already offered from the bottom of my tomb, not, as some of the public prints have had the weakness or the malignity to give out, *to write only in subserviency to the views of the FRENCH Ministry*, but absolutely not to write any more, if that were required of me; to shut myself up in total silence, provided that, in lieu of this sacrifice, the common rights of a Citizen at least were restored to me; (14) provided that, for consenting to remain useless to society, since that was exacted of me, they would cease to treat me more rigorously than so many men who are a burthen to it. I tempered, in short, these entreaties, and these offers, with a degree of meekness and submission, at which impartial men who were privy to my conduct were almost offended; and some of them were inclined to think, that at length my heart was subdued, or my understanding had given way, under the excess of misfortune.

They were mistaken: my conduct at this juncture differed not from that which I had observed on every other occasion of my life: I have never had recourse to measures calculated to attract the public eye, till I had tried every imaginable way of avoiding them.

And here it was not till I was left without a

shadow of doubt that a plan had been formed to embitter the rest of my days, to complete the destruction of every kind of resource which yet remained to me, in sequestering me alike from my friends and my concerns, that I at length determined on a step become indispensibly necessary.

Even then I listened to the scruples of a loyal subject, who respects the name of his Prince, in the very abuses which his Ministers dare to make of it. Returning to *Brussels*, I had at first no idea of seeking any other retreat. Though struck with horror at the devastation of my house, with indignation at the innumerable instances of meanness and infidelity committed by the Ministerial Agents who had flocked thither to treat my effects as my person had been treated at *Paris*; I contented myself with regretting my losses, and gathering together the wrecks of my fortune. My only wish was, to find some means of diverting my grief.

I had in contemplation a journey of several years : after having paid my homage at the feet of a Prince who gives such exemplary lessons of real greatness to all other Princes, and who restores to the throne of the *Cæsars* a degree of lustre with which it is long since any throne has been graced ; my intention was to travel into *Italy*, to try to forget, in the study of the monuments of past ages, what I have suffered in the present.

This indirect method of acting in conformity to the views of the *French* Ministry was not however allowed me. I was informed by some faithful

friend, that not to have piqued myself on an obedience perfectly literal, was with them no venial offence ; and that by ambuscades prepared on my way, the road to *Italy* would, to me, infallibly become the road back to the *Bastille*.

As I received this intelligence from the same hand which had forewarned me of the *first Lettre-de-cachet* (for such warning I had received, though I had refused to listen to it) I thought it not prudent to brave a second. Between these Ministerial boons and me I have placed a barrier too wide for them to clear. My real protectors, those who have contributed to my safety, will doubtless not be displeased that I have taken effectual precautions to preserve the fruit of their kindness. If there are others who consider those precautions with resentment, by that very resentment they prove their necessity.

I would ask now of all honest and impartial men, What could I have done, which I have not done ? What have I done, which I have not been obliged to do ?

Let them deign to reflect a moment on the circumstances which have accompanied and followed the restitution of my liberty. What ! to the order for my departure from *Paris*, where I had business of the last emergency, subjoin another, prohibiting me from going to *Brussels*, where concerns not less important demanded my presence ! The only answer to the prayers, the offers, the very humiliations, by which I hoped to obtain a dispensation from one of those two

injunctions, is a third, condemning me, after a state of inactivity, to a suspension of existence, of two years duration, to continue to vegetate in the gloomy recess of an obscure borough, in irksome and fatal indolence. These are the favours, the bounties, that succeed to an oppression unprecedented in all its circumstances !

What could be the object of them ? Was it to punish me ? Alas for what ! What was my crime ? Had they ever told me ? Did they even then tell me ? The justice they had at length so reluctantly rendered me, sufficiently proved my innocence. Who will believe, that if they could have conjured up the shadow of a pretence for loading me with perpetual chains, they would have broken those to which they had destined me without any pretence ? A malefactor convicted and condemned may indeed receive as a favour the mitigation of his punishment : but an innocent man !——

Was it my duty to consider this caprice of the Ministry as a mark of paternal attention ? They certainly did not affect to treat me as those are treated, who having long been deprived of sustenance, are become voracious in their appetite. It is by slow degrees that a skilful Physician prescribes to such patients that nourishment in which too sudden and liberal an indulgence might expose them to suffocation. In all probability it was not the sudden effect of too free an air that was apprehended on my account ; it was not to render the regimen of liberty more salutary to me, that

they had the delicacy to restore me to it only by imperceptible gradations.

If this political diet had an object, it was not to me that they meant to spare the dangers of it. What it was really designed to prevent, was the explosion of those sighs which had been accumulating during two twelve months of despair ; it was the first aspirations of a heart tortured during that period with such cool barbarity, with so composed a neglect of every thing that was just : it was my well-grounded complaint against a species of violence which has cut off two years of my life ; against those outrages, of which the effects will curtail the remainder of it ; against a sort of treatment which ever has been, and perhaps ever will be, without example, even at the *Bastille*. This is what they dreaded.

But, not to have made of this precaution a new outrage, an additional iniquity, it was at least necessary to have reconciled it with the arrangement of my personal affairs, with the care of my domestic concerns. I was suing neither for pension, nor indemnity, nor appointment ; I solicited nothing but permission to collect the fragments of my property, wantonly attacked, and still more wantonly dissipated. Without this permission ; pillaged by the substitutes of the *French* Ministry, of the *French* Police ; ruined by a perfidious Agent, unable to recover the arrears due to me, to remedy past, or prevent future depredations ; how was I to have subsisted at *Rethel Mazarine* ? Are these *Lettres-de-cachet*, then, Letters of exchange ?

It has been publickly intimated, that when I was put to the final test, rewards were held out to me ; that, if I had endured with resignation this last act of my martyrdom, coronets were preparing for me ; but that I had rejected all with disdain, preferring the blind expectation of revenge to the peaceable enjoyment of those benefactions which would have been a full indemnity for my misfortunes.

Nothing can be more false. The only recompence which was announced to me was the chance of *learning one day or other, after being for a long time very obedient, THE TRUE CAUSE OF MY CONFINEMENT*. It was by a man in favour that this allurements was offered to me. A man in place contented himself with saying, *If you wish to live here, TRY TO BE FORGOTTEN*.

I judged it more easy, more safe, more necessary, to try to make my escape : but I once more declare ; obsequious even in my apparent disobedience ; still cherishing, and revering, the bands from which however those of the *Bastille* had but too fully absolved me ; it was in the vicinity of my country, it was in a territory which (if I may so express myself) is a continuation of it, that I should have been content to seek a retreat, if this could have been insured me ; and nothing but the excess of prevarication, and of danger, could have driven me back to the inaccessible asylum where I now am, and which I ought never to have quitted.

Those who are alarmed, perhaps not without

cause, at the retreat and the independence which I now enjoy, will not fail to arm themselves with the only specious pretext which could serve the purposes of their malignity. They will accuse me of *ingratitude* and *revolt*: they will say, that if no *State-crime* is to be found in my past conduct, the choice of my present asylum is one: they will paint as a criminal escape the effort which they have rendered indispensable: they will produce, as a proof of the justness of those prepossessions which they opposed to the restitution of my liberty, the use which they have forced me to make of it, and the exercise of a faculty which, they will say, *it was in their power* to with-hold from me.

That it was in their power to with-hold it, is not to be doubted. Men possessed of force have it always in their option to retain, without limitation of time, what they have seized without colour of right: nothing is more clear. But that is not the point in agitation.

The question is only, on the one hand, whether, because a groundless captivity has not been an endless one too, I ought blindly to have submitted to the continuation of that rigour which originated in iniquity; and on the other hand, whether having estimated the validity of a prohibition repugnant to reason and justice, and in which it is impossible to suppose the King had any participation, I could have thought myself secure, any where else but in *England*, against that Ministerial despotism which had not respected even its own solemn protection?

The engagement, totally useless, but very authentic, which was signed in the name of the Count *de Maurepas*, who no longer exists, by the Count *de Vergennes*, who is still in existence, must not be forgotten : by this engagement, as hath been seen above, *the safety of my person* was guaranteed, not, as is pretended, *for a limited time*, but for ever, and without any restriction, or at least without any other restriction, even implied, than that, with which most assuredly I have not failed in my compliance, of continuing to *respect the King, Religion, and the State*.

Has the King been left unapprised of this basis of my security in his dominions? or rather, in traducing me to him in order to destroy the esteem with which he honoured me, in order to determine him to that rigour to which the truth would certainly not have induced him, have they persuaded him that this barrier ought to be no obstacle to that rigour? Of this I know nothing.

What I do know is, that with my protection and my innocence, under a mild and an equitable reign, I have been treated, during two years, not as a person accused, pre-admonished of some offence ; (for against such a man an action is commenced ; he is informed of the accusation on which it is grounded ; he is allowed to make his defence ;) but as a delinquent convicted of *High Treason*, with every concomitant aggravation. Now, the *parole* of the Ministers of *France*, and the rectitude of my conduct, having failed me as

guarantee for the past, when their vindictive perfidy was left without a pretext; what had I to expect in future, whilst I remained in the vicinity of *France*, after having, by a measure lawful indeed, and necessary, but contrary to their will, furnished, according to the rules of their implacable despotism, a specious pretext for some further oppression? I could not flatter myself that I should be less reprehensible: could I expect that they would become more religiously scrupulous?

Circumstanced as I then was, bad I a free choice of my retreat? Could, I or ought I to have hesitated between the *Bastille* and *Great Britain*? After having quitted without disgrace, perhaps with glory, this generous Nation, might I not without remorse come back to implore its protection?



SECTION II.

My Confinement had no just Motive.

FAIRLY acquitted of the charge of ingratitude or revolt in the use I have made of the liberty restored to me, I think I ought not to suffer a

shadow of doubt to subsist with regard to the causes which deprived me of it, or rather with regard to the real fact, which is, that there has been no cause which could be rationally assigned for the abuse of power, of which that privation has been the result. A summary discussion of this matter is what I owe to myself, to my friends, to the confidence of those honest men, who, judging of my disposition by their own, have, on the sole presumption of my innocence, constantly engaged in my defence. To them I must demonstrate, that in this prepossession they have not been mistaken.

My reputation has been too long consigned to the fury of my enemies, who were then under no apprehensions of being refuted; and to the licentiousness of news-writers, justified, it is true, by the parade and the rigour of my imprisonment. How indeed could they imagine, that under a government not absolutely atrocious, and particularly under a King whose good designs are sufficiently evident, a degree of treatment so severe should be without an adequate cause?

A foreign Minister, who interested himself warmly in my behalf, as well from his own inclination, as by the special command of his sovereign, told me, at the time of my release, that no *State-Affair* had ever been more gravely discussed than mine was; and that in spite of his propensity to believe me innocent, he had concluded, from the manner in which he was silenced whenever he renewed his solicitations, that I was

guilty of some treasonable offence, of which it was a mark of great lenity in government not to precipitate the chastisement.

All those, indeed, who made any efforts in my favour, found a like reception. At one time a chilling silence; at another, some tokens of pity and regret; now encomiums, even, which seemed to indicate a friendly disposition towards me, rendered ineffectual by causes exceedingly terrible; then half-words, which left a boundless and very melancholy scope to the imagination, on the enormity of the offence, and on the duration as well as justice of the punishment;—that is what my friends experienced from men in place; from those, at least, to whom it could not be supposed the real motives of my confinement were unknown.

It is inconceivable, I confess, not only that the object of a system of intrigue like this, should in the issue prove absolutely innocent, but that he should never have been even arraigned: it is no less so, that in giving up his person to such treatment as crimes of the greatest magnitude, established on the clearest evidence, would hardly have justified, they should with an unfeeling disregard sacrifice his honour likewise to public wantonness and malignity; that they should authorise that malignity to consider, to give out, as a proof of his delinquency, the iniquitous rigour with which he was overwhelmed; that the authors of those perfidious insinuations should be those very men who best knew the iniquity,

and the danger of them ; in a word, that this danger and this iniquity should constitute a part of their vindictive schemes, of the selfish plan to which they meant to render these injurious falsehoods subservient.

It is inconceivable that a Ministry capable of cruelties so refined, so uniformly persevered in, and of such profound hypocrisy, should exist ; that men engaged, or supposed to be engaged, in the most important public affairs, should find time to concert so scandalous an imposition ; that they should thus colleague to deceive at once the Prince who honours them with his confidence, and the Public who are witnesses of their conduct ; that they should enter into a confederacy to effect, by such machinations, the destruction—of whom ? Of a private individual, an irreproachable character, whose only fault has been to have too tenderly loved his country, and to have had too implicit a confidence in their plighted word. This, however, is a fact no less true than astonishing.

I know not (I must say it again) what may have been told to the King ; what calumnies may have been employed to make the apparent necessity of crushing me, as if by a thunder-clap, preponderate in his mind against the pleasure he appeared to take in reading my works, and the propensity he had to protect me. Not a word of this has ever been communicated to me : during my twenty months confinement, I have never undergone the shadow of an interrogatory, not the least appearance of an examination. And here

in the face of all *Europe*, I solemnly defy the *French* Ministers to produce one single act, to prove that in their proceedings against me they have regarded the least formality.

My enlargement, as hath already been shewn, was accompanied with the same mystery : in the order of exile the same silence has been observed : so that I know not precisely against what to justify myself ; since I am absolutely ignorant of what they might have laid to my charge.

This very silence, observed towards a man who was languishing under every species of aggravated cruelty, in which a full and striking conviction is implied, bespeaks, doubtless, a strong prepossession in his favour. It is what all laws universally proscribe ; what is no where allowed but at the *Bastille* ; and what perhaps, even there, except in my case alone, they have never dared to venture upon. The nullity or the falsehood of accusation would need no other proof.

But what is more, what will effectually remove the last degree of doubt, is, that I have been incessantly told at the *Bastille*, that my confinement originated in the immediate and direct will of the King ; that I was not a man so obscure, so insignificant, that such a stroke of authority would have been hazarded against me without his consent. This is the sacred barrier that has been constantly opposed to my endeavours to attain, if not the full discovery, at least a partial glimpse, of the ground, so cautiously concealed, of my imprisonment. It is, then, on some kind of

delinquency, on some express and positive accusation, that this will, this consent, have been founded.

Ah, ye audacious calumniators ! whose attempt to rob me of the esteem of that Protector whom nature and providence had given me, might have prevailed, it is before his footstool that I summon you : it is in the presence of Him whose honest and liberal soul you have abused, that I impeach you. If you have said any thing to him, which could for a moment bring in question my loyalty to his person, my devotion to his interests, my horror for every kind of intrigue in general, and especially for such as might have had an opposite tendency ; I declare to you in formal terms, that every word you have uttered has been a lye.

Do not flatter yourselves that you will be able to shrink from my representations, under the veil, so often profaned, of respect due to *Secrets of State* : do not deceive yourselves in the vain hope that this will conceal the springs of your fraudulent despotism, as the *Bastille* conceals its operations. No ; I will pursue you into that asylum which you pollute : I will there resound, without ceasing, these words, so terrible to you, and to which perhaps the equitable Monarch, in whose presence I address them to you, will not be insensible : “ You have basely imposed upon him. “ My conduct and my writings have always been “ incorrupt as my heart.”

You have suffered it to be said, to be affirmed, to be printed in all the public papers, “ That I “ had composed and communicated Memoirs

“calculated to draw embarrassing claims upon France, or at least to awaken the desire of asserting them.” This is the rumour which I found to have most generally obtained, on my resurrection from my grave: this is the opprobrium to which you had devoted my ashes, if, in spite of your eudeavours, an all-powerful hand had not snatched me out of it.

Perhaps your view in opposing yourselves to my return to *Brussels*, was still to confirm, to give additional credit to that falsehood, so criminal, and so absurd. Perhaps, after having had the cunning to render it probable in the eyes of those whom you wished to deceive, you have had that too of retarding an *éclaircissement* between the two Sovereigns whom it concerned, and of preventing an explanation by which I should have been justified.

Nay, perhaps dreading the protection with which I was honoured by the august and virtuous Princess who is the band of their union, you have forged this calumny merely to reduce her to silence when my affair should be the object of discussion. Consort of the one, and sister of the other, till facts were cleared up, she must have been cautious of appearing to interest herself for a man suspected of having failed of his duty alike towards them both: and how were those facts to be cleared, when on the delicate subject, on which you had raised suspicions, it was so easy to elude an *éclaircissement*.

Your interest, however, will not enable you to

stifle this my solemn protestation. Exclusively limited in my literary toils, I have indulged myself in no other political speculations whatever, but those I have published in the *Annals*: and, for the sake of refuting the falsehood which you have either invented, or tolerated, I here presume to invoke that august Sovereign whose name is called in question. Far from giving myself up to that unaccountable madness which would have disposed me to foretell and to justify the dismemberment of *France*, it is in her bosom that with unceasing views I have been preparing myself a retreat: it is on her prosperity that I have perpetually rested the dependance of my own, till the very moment in which you have requited the tenderest attachment with torments scarcely reserved for her most implacable enemies; till that moment, of all her children none has been more affectionately obedient, of all her subjects none more scrupulously faithful.

If I had ever conceived the idea of a sentiment different from those I here unfold, some traces of it must doubtless still exist. Ah! dare then to disclose them; bring forth into open day: ransack your *bureaux*; put in motion the priviledged spies whose clandestine zeal you have so dearly paid. If at length I am found guilty, the boldness of my denial will ultimately excite, in those with whom the proofs of my perfidy are deposited, a degree of indignation proportioned to the contempt with which my original treachery would have inspired them in the beginning: they will be eager to assist you in bringing to confusion an hypocritical im-

postor, who should dare to flatter himself that he could impose on your indulgence, who should so strenuously endeavour to reconcile the appearance of virtue with the stratagems of iniquity. There is neither *State-concern*, nor *State-secret*, which can possibly be an obstacle to discoveries that would be so dear to you.

But far, very far, am I from fearing, them ! My conduct, as my works in general, without the least exception, has constantly borne the stamp of one uniform sentiment ; I mean, that of a patriotic enthusiasm, a delicacy on this point, carried to the extreme. Here, my tongue, my pen, and my heart, have been invariably in unison. Here I have left no alternative, but those of refuting me upon facts, or of acknowledging how odious, how criminal, have been those artifices which could for a moment render my innocence problematical.

But has my private correspondence been equally unexceptionable as my public conduct ? Have I not been guilty of some internal act of imprudence, some secret indiscretion, sufficient to justify the animadversion of government ? Have I not shocked some man in power, to whose rank some reparation may have been judged due ? This is the last resource of my persecutors : it is also the last stroke of that fatality which has destined me to be a model of passive oppression in every possible way.

Is it not strange, after what I have suffered from the fury of Corporations, from the prevarication of men in place, that I should be obliged to

vindicate myself on such an occasion as this ; to give an account of every sigh which indignation has extorted from me, of all the convulsions which grief has thrown me into ? I must not however decline the enumeration ; both because it is necessary, and because it will complete the discovery of all those enormities, of all that cowardice, of which I have been the victim.

The only complaint, of the kind last mentioned, which has been communicated to me, that which has been presented to me as the sole cause of my confinement, is a letter to the *Marshal de Duras*. I pretend not to justify it, and its discussion would be useless : but it was a private letter, which concerned him only in his private character ; a letter, which had been challenged, and even necessitated by a sort of conduct more reprehensible than the letter itself was violent ; a secret letter, which I have never exposed ; a letter which I have never denied to have written, because I am not capable of a lye, but which the *Marshal de Duras*, at least in public, has always denied to have received ; a letter of which he constantly averred he had made no complaint ; of which he had in fact made so little, that, notwithstanding my requisitions, they could not produce me the original ; and which, consequently, could by no means constitute the ground of any suit or punishment whatsoever ; a letter, in short, upon which may answer, when I was asked if I had written it, ought to have put Hatred to the blush, and made Vengeance drop her arms. (17)

Whatever it was, it is evident that the exposure of it could alone render it criminal ; and it had not been exposed. Whatever it was, though it had even been published with as much scandal as that which accompanied my confinement, it was no *State-crime*. Whatever it was certainly it could not have justified twenty months imprisonment in the *Bastille*, with a continuance of the most atrocious treatment of which that infernal precinct had even been the theatre.

I am well aware that my readers will be curious to know the tenour of this piece, so fatal, and so mysterious ; and, were I sensible to the thirst of vengeance alone, I should certainly make it public. But, here again I am tenacious of my respect even for the intentions of the King : my letter no sooner appears to move his displeasure, than I abandon it ; I sacrifice it to the opinion which he entertains of it, setting no higher value on this last homage, than the satisfaction of having paid it. (18)

But in the cabinet of the *French* Ministers there exists another letter, which has contributed, perhaps in a greater degree than the former, to my misfortune. This, however, they have taken effectual care to keep back from the eyes of the King : if, indeed, it had been laid before him, it would have secured me against all I have suffered. I was never so much as once reminded of it : but, as I have not a doubt that it had much greater influence, than the other, on the resolution of the Ministry ; as it is evident, that in making use of the former to irritate the mind of the

King, they had the discretion to conceal from him the latter, which could only alarm and exasperate his Ministers; I am of opinion that I ought to give it a place here.

This letter was dated on the morrow after that to the Marshal *de Duras*: it was addressed to M. *Le Noir*, Lieutenant of the Police, through whose hands the *Annales* regularly passed, in order to be delivered to the distributor.

It is necessary to recollect, that in March, 1770, the 59th and 60th Numbers had been successively stopped, at the solicitation of the Marshal *de Duras*, and the *Parliament of Paris*. The first suppression I had patiently submitted to: on the second, I wrote, the 7th of April, 1780, to the Marshal *de Duras*, the letter which he does not hand about, nor I neither; and on the morrow, to M. *Le Noir*, that which follows.

Brussels, April 8, 1780.

“ SIR,

“ After having, in my letter of yesterday, given
“ way, to an indignation too well founded, I am
“ going to make some further efforts in the name
“ of justice and reason; though I have learnt,
“ to my cost, how little weight they have in
“ *France* against interest and intrigue. The fol-
“ lowing is a short memorial, which I entreat
“ you to lay before the eyes of the Ministers:
“ they will not fail to impute it, still, to my
“ obstinacy; but I presume it should be ascribed
“ to the goodness of my cause.

“ I cannot conceive that the Marshal *de Duras*
“ would wish to figure any longer in public. I
“ confess, that nothing can be added to what the
“ Count *Desgrée* has told him : however, it is
“ something to repeat it, and to remark to the
“ Public, that the *Marshal* has obtained no
“ satisfaction for it. It appears to me, that in
“ his situation, he ought, of all things, to avoid
“ making a noise in the world ; and he is going
“ to make more than he has ever done in his
“ life.

“ Be this as it may, I can only repeat to you
“ what I have already had the honour of saying
“ to you several times, on my aversion to be
“ again involved in the bickerings of past times,
“ on the ardent desire I have of being no more
“ exposed to them ; but, at the same time, on the
“ courage with which I shall support myself under
“ them. It will cost me my fortune ; but I am
“ accustomed to sacrifices.

“ The sale of the N^{os}. LIX. and LX. of the
“ *Annales* has been stopped at *Paris* : they are
“ published and circulated in *England*, in *Holland*,
“ in *Germany*, in the *Low-Countries* ; and even in
“ *France* by the pirates who counterfeited them. To
“ suppress in *Paris* only the genuine edition,
“ whilst all the others are tolerated, and even
“ encouraged, is to do an act of injustice at once
“ very shocking, and totally useless : it will not
“ hinder the prohibited Numbers from finding
“ their way into *Paris* ; it will only render them
“ more noted, more sought for, and more valuable :

“ the desire of them will be only the more lively,
“ and of longer continuance. I don’t see what the
“ parties concerned have to gain by it.

“ These Numbers contain nothing censurable ;
“ far from it : the 59th might have been infinitely
“ more severe. I do not imagine that the interests
“ of the very ridiculous Nephew of M. *de Leyrit*
“ (19) have the least weight in this suppression.
“ The only object, then, is to spare the Marshal
“ *de Duras* the disagreeable circumstances of a
“ mortifying reflection on his affair. But is that
“ peculiar to this Number? or rather, is it not
“ there that it is softened, at least to the ad-
“ vantage of the commandant?

“ When two men, destined by their birth and
“ condition to give an example of probity in their
“ actions, and of delicacy in their words, mutually
“ accuse each other, in the face of all *Europe* of
“ every kind of *knavery*, and *larceny*, making use
“ of those very terms; and when they have
“ recourse to a regular Tribunal to obtain re-
“ paration and justice; if that Tribunal leaves
“ the affair undecided, it commits at least one
“ act of prevarication, and perhaps two. If one
“ of the parties is guilty, it is scandalous that he
“ is not punished : if neither of them is so, it is
“ yet more scandalous, that the decree of the
“ Court should encrease suspicions, instead of
“ destroying them; should stigmatise two innocent
“ men, instead of acquitting them. This is all
“ that I have said; and it is upon the judges
“ that my reflection falls. The Public is not

“ so indulgent : it is the Writer of *Castellan*
 “ whom it points out as the man really guilty ;
 “ and the supplicated suppression of the 59th
 “ Number will not reinstate him.

“ As to the contents of N^o. LX. they are facts.
 “ The vexations of the *Parliaments* ; their secret
 “ tyrannies ; the support which the Members all
 “ think they owe one to the other, and in reality
 “ afford one another on occasions where they
 “ ought the least to allow themselves to con-
 “ found their legal character with their private
 “ interests ;—the corruptness of the *Secretaries* ;
 “ their intrigues, their perfidies, their custom of
 “ extorting fees on both sides, are notorious
 “ matters. As authority does not deign either
 “ to punish, or repress these abuses, it is necessary
 “ at least that the certainty of not being able to
 “ screen them from public censure, should put
 “ some kind of restraint upon them : it is the
 “ interest of Government ; it is the interest of
 “ those very Companies who are degraded by so
 “ many excesses.

“ *Whilst I wrote from ENGLAND, I was exposed*
 “ *to none of these broils ;* (20) and I wrote things
 “ much more forcible. It is however upon the
 “ plan conceived, digested, and executed in *Eng-*
 “ *land*, and well known in *France*, that the
 “ agreements took place between the Public in
 “ *France*, the Posts of *France*, and myself. It
 “ was in conformity to that plan that subscrip-
 “ tions were opened and received ; that the
 “ circulation of the work was authorised ; and

“that the King accepted the copies which I
“addressed immediately to him. It was not
“stipulated as a condition, that I should respect
“the cowardice of the *Marshals of France*, if
“either of them should be guilty of any, or the
“prevarication of the Tribunals. No such terms
“were proposed to me; none such should I
“have accepted.

“I never meant to subject myself to any
“Censorial power: on the contrary, I have loudly
“protested, I have more than once declared in
“print, that I would never have any other Censor
“than my own delicacy. I have not said one
“word which might subject that to be called in
“question. Whence then those trammels in
“which they take upon them to confine me?

“Repassing the sea, I have changed my
“situation, but not my heart: I have without
“reluctance sacrificed my fortune; I will never
“sacrifice my independence, nor the prerogatives
“to which a solemn obligation has entitled me.
“I may suffer for my passionate regard for *France*,
“for my confidence in the Ministry of *France*, for
“my absolute devotion to my Country: I may be
“determined, by downright disgust, to leave off
“writing; but I shall never be reduced to write
“like a slave. Of all the indemnities due to me
“from the Government of *France*, that which I
“believe to be the least costly, and I am sure is
“the most useful to her, is the freedom of my
“pen!”

This letter I do not doubt, I never have doubted, though I have never spoken of it, as the real cause of my misfortunes : this is what has determined the Ministry of *France* to seize the opportunity of revenge. At the time of my departure from *England*, they could not refuse to the firmness, the integrity of my conduct, the solemn protection of which I have spoken ; and since that time they have not been able to find any pretence to violate it.

Further, I owe this justice to the memory of the Count *de Maurepas* : he was neither vindictive, nor implacable : entirely taken up in perpetuating his ease, and his influence, he sought no other enjoyment. What was lively in the *Annales*, amused him : what was serious, gave him no uneasiness. Perhaps he found a pleasure even in the idea that it was himself who had the credit of protecting me.

His agents in administration were not altogether of the same way of thinking : some of them still bore in mind the letter to the Count *de Vergennes*, and the portraits that were drawn in it : others dreaded the unreserved frankness of the *Annales*. Pick-pockets, says a certain intelligent man, *shun the light of the lamps*. The great success of that work, the very respectable suffrages united in its favour, the friendly zeal of all those who had nothing to fear from it, that, is of all virtuous and impartial men, had held Malevolence in chains.

But when, for the purpose of extorting the consent of the old Minister, they had the letter of

the 8th of April, which was shewn only to him, and which he might without difficulty be led to construe into a menace; when, to prejudice the mind of the young King, they had the other letter of the 7th, which likewise was produced only to Him, with additions which he alone was to hear; it was easy to fabricate the order which till then they had perhaps despaired of obtaining. It will not be doubted that the business was transacted in the manner I have here suggested, when it is considered that the letter to M. *Le Noir* is of the VIIIth OF APRIL, 1780, and the *Lettre-de-cachet* of the XVth of the same month. But from this same date another kind of inference is to be drawn. My hand yet starts at the very idea of it; and it is with equal horror, and depression of spirits, that I am going to disclose it.

- ✓ The 16th of April 1780, I was not in *France*.
✓ I had it in my option never to have returned thither: and, if my blind fanaticism for my Country; if my confidence, yet more extravagant than blind, in a promise of the *French* Ministers, joined to a thousand treacheries, of which a specimen will presently be seen, had not made me neglect intelligence but too well grounded, I never should have returned thither.
✓ The *Lettre-de-cachet*, therefore, might never have been put in force. This thunder-bolt, then, was forged at a venture, without any knowledge whether it would ever produce its effect. The *French* Ministry, it seems, keep these murderous weapons in reserve; they have magazines where

these instruments of its vengeance are deposited ; and they can peaceably wait, like the sportsman in ambush, till the game presents itself of its own accord, to receive the shot which he is ready to aim for its destruction.

Nor is this all ; for they imitate the cunning of this sportsman no less with respect to the preliminaries than to the object. A variety of perfidious tricks, some of them more cowardly than others, have been successively multiplied to conceal from me the snare which had been just laid in my way. Is not even the currency restored to the *Annales* in their distribution, immediately after the 16th of April, one of the most criminal kind !

What ! continue to circulate in public, under guarantee of the Royal authority, a work, of which the Author had been secretly proscribed, and devoted by the Ministers to that disgrace, to that severity, which are reserved for the enemies of the King and the State ! continue to receive it, in order to deliver it to the King, and actually deliver it to him ; affect to applaud the marks of satisfaction with which he did not cease to honour it ; and take special care that I should be acquainted with this !

The same engine by which the news of an approbation so flattering was conveyed to me, was employed to entice me to *Paris*. That spy, under the mask of a friend, who had been pensioned by the Police, at my expence, for five years past to penetrate into my secrets, having

learnt that I was not unacquainted with this circumstance, laboured incessantly to dissipate the terror with which it had inspired me, by this consideration, that they would not have restored liberty to the *Annales*, if they had wished to deprive the Author of that of his person; and that I might go into *France* without any apprehensions, as my works were so favourably received at *Versailles*. Thus the sacred name of the King was made use of to facilitate the success of an iniquity, of which that very name was to be the instrument!

This iniquity was not perpetrated till the end of six months; but at the end of six years, of twenty, the *Lettre-de-cachet* which authorised it, would have had the same efficacy. I was devoted, then, for the rest of my life, to undergo, at some time or other, the stab of this poignard; and in extreme old-age, when, borne down by calamity, and exhausted by toils, I might have come to ask my country, as a recompence for so many exertions and sacrifices, permission to die there in peace, I should have found no gates open to receive me but the *Bastille*, no other sepulchre but its dungeons!

After these reflections, what, in God's name, can we style the *Lettre-de-cachet* of the 16th of April 1780! how describe that eagerness to fabricate it, and that patience in waiting the moment of its execution!

Let it now be considered, that an imprisonment thus instigated, thus prepared, and thus consum-

mated, has lasted near *Two years*; that it has done me an injury, almost equally irreparable, in my property, and in my health; that, if it has not totally ruined me in my civil capacity, and closed my life at an untimely period, I owe this to a peculiar favour of Providence, which, having apparently destined me to the task I am now performing, I mean, making public the horrors of the *Bastille*, has endued me with an organisation expressly calculated to support them.

If it is to the Marshal *de Duras* that so ample a satisfaction has been thought due, one should hardly be able to forbear repeating what was said on this occasion by one of the greatest Monarchs in Europe: "*This Monsieur de Duras then must be a very great Personage!*"

Examples on this subject would amount to nothing: in a matter where all is caprice and despotism, authorities and comparisons are very useless. I cannot however help citing one.

Among the numberless *Imbastillements*, which have been designed as a satisfaction to powerful Personages, may be reckoned that of *La Beaumelle*. This writer, more than indiscreet, had dared to insert, in his *Memoirs of Madame de Maintenon*, the following phrase: "*The Court of Vienna, long accused of keeping in pay, people ready to administer poison, . . .*" The offence was certainly heinous, as well as public: the punishment might therefore justly be severe, and reparation exemplary.

However, *Five months* in the *Bastille* appeared

sufficient. *La Beaumelle* found an effectual protection in the generosity of the very Court which he had insulted ; it was at the solicitation of that Court that he was enlarged—and without being exiled.

However mighty the Marshal *de Duras* as a man of arms ; however accomplished the Marshal *de Duras* as a man of letters ; however refined the Marshal *de Duras* as a man of wit ; however great the Marshal *de Duras* as an *Academician* ; notwithstanding all these titles, it is not probable that he has appeared to the *French Ministry*, Himself, all alone, a personage more important than the House of *Austria* all together. However violent my six unknown lines to the Marshal *de Duras* may be supposed, it cannot be imagined they were comparable to the public calumny, equally atrocious as false, in the romance just mentioned.

If then the Marshal *de Duras* has condescended to serve as Sponsor to the *Lettre-de-cachet* against me in the time of its infancy, it is clear that I am not to impute to him the guilt of its protracted existence : he could not have asked, nor would they have offered him, so tedious an atonement (21). If it has not been believed that this atonement was demanded by a terrestrial divinity somewhat more respectable, it is not the fault of that indiscretion, or rather that malignity, which was every where busied in seeking matter of censure against me, and of exculpation in favour of the *French Ministry*. That malignity has not been

contented with calling in question the name of a single sovereign on my account. After having given out my pretended connection with one, as the motive of the iniquity of the 27th of September 1780, they have endeavoured to make another a direct accomplice in it. It has been circulated abroad, that the *Lettre-de-cachet* had been granted at the instance of his *Prussian* Majesty. The rumour was spread and still subsists, that that Monarch, piqued at the Epistle to M. *d'Alembert*,* and at the particulars which I thought proper to publish of the famous affair of the *Miller*,† and further stimulated by the entreaties of the little *Platos* of *Paris*, had been earnest, at *Versailles*, in soliciting my imprisonment ; that the *French* Ministry could not refuse this mark of condescension to a Philosopher of such importance ; and that the gates of my prison could not possibly be opened without the consent of him by whose order they had been shut.

But is it probable, that a Legislator so equitable, so beneficent in his own dominions, would have sunk so low as to solicit an act of injustice and oppression, on his behalf in the dominions of another? Is it probable, that having lately done the Author of the *Annales* the honour of adopting his very expressions in one of his laws,‡ he would have indulged himself in a caprice of this kind

* See *Annales Politiques*, &c. Vol. ix. p. 79.

† Ibid. p. 4, &c.

‡ See the *Annales*, Vol. vii. p. 434.

against that same writer, who had never offended him? Is it probable, besides, that *Versailles* would have thought she owed so cruel an homage to *Potsdam*; that they would have dared to propose to the King of *France* to become an instrument of vengeance to the King of *Prussia*? With regard to such public offences as tend to blast the honour of a Crown, like that of *La Beaumelle*, of whom I have just now spoken, Princes may undoubtedly render each other the service of repressing them, although not personally interested: but in all other respects they carry their jealousy of power so high, as to protect, and that sometimes to the prejudice of public order, even persons who are criminal. How is it possible then to suspect them of acting in concert to proscribe one who was innocent?

In short, what completes the justification of his *Prussian* Majesty, and clearly proves that I have not been the *Callisthenes* of this *Alexander* of the *North*, is the date of the *Letter-de-cachet* in question. The 16th of April, 1780, is considerably prior to the pretended wrongs with which they would have connected it. It is evident then, that that Prince has not tarnished his philosophical career, in persecuting with such animosity, a writer who has not indeed courted his favour, but from whom he certainly could not withhold his esteem.

The particulars of the treatment I underwent, and the very duration of my imprisonment, are so many additional proofs that he took no part in the affair. If he had been the real author of it, would not the loss of my liberty have appeared to him an

ample satisfaction? Would he have required of the Ministers of *Versailles* those refinements of revenge of which I am presently to treat? or could they have mistaken him so far, so grossly insulted him, as to mean by such measures to conciliate his good-will? Far from wishing to protract my distress would not his generosity have urged him to imitate the example of the Court of *Vienna* towards *La Beaumelle*? Having infinitely less cause of complaint, would he have given way to a greater degree of implacability? Would he have prescribed for a *Frenchman*, at the *Bastille*, those severities which one of his own subjects, really criminal, would not have had to fear at *Spandaw*!

It is very astonishing that the names of two Princes so illustrious should have been thus blended with the misfortunes of a private individual; of him, who, on account of his personal simplicity, his dislike to all sorts of parade, his abhorrence of every kind of intrigue, his indifference to fortune and every ambitious pursuit, ought perhaps, of all men who cultivate literature, to have been the least exposed to the dangers attending the honour of being known to Sovereigns: but it is at least equally evident, that neither of those whom I have here mentioned could possibly have contributed to what I have undergone. My imprisonment has no more owed its origin, or its duration, to the pretended requisitions sent from *Berlin*, than to the pretended communications dispatched to *Vienna*.

What then has been the motive, the object of this duress? That indeed has not been concealed from me : it is the only mark of confidence ever shown me at the *Bastille* ; the only answer with which my supplications have been honoured.

At the expiration of a fortnight I was plainly told that the Marshal *de Duras* was now quite out of the question.—If not the M. *de Duras*, pray what is it then?—Oh, *THEY* are afraid that you “ will seek opportunities of revenge : the doors “ would presently be opened to you, if *THEY* were “ sure that you would not flourish away against “ them.” For in speaking to me of the Deities of this *Tartarus* they always made use of the collective word *THEY*. This is what was constantly told me during *Twenty months*, and what the public knew very well without my telling them.

Putting himself now in my place, let the reader judge with what terror, with what heavy indignation, these cowardly confessions must have filled my soul. It was, then, a future and uncertain *éclat* which determined my present servitude ! After I had been sacrificed to vindictive injustice, its effects were perpetuated against me merely for the tranquillity of my oppressors ! According to their political ritual I ought to have been detained so long as I was to be *dreaded* ; that is. till my soul should have been debased, or my organs deranged, or at least my feeble talents destroyed by the frigidity of age, and the convulsions of despair.

What an unaccountable destiny ! When the

point in debate was, to rob me of my civil establishment, in complaisance to a band of *enrobed* assassins, an *Advocate-general*, their accomplice, devoid of all shame, said in open court, in full audience, that I could not possibly be left in possession of it, because of the troubles *I should not fail ONE DAY* to excite*, in—I know not what order of men : and here, where my person was to be disposed of, it was coldly consigned to endless slavery, on account of the resentment which *I should not fail ONE DAY to entertain!*

Thus, ever peaceable in reality, and formidable in idea ; always blameless at the present, and criminal in the future ; it is for the hereafter that I have been punished. My enemies have never been able to excuse their iniquities but by presages yet more iniquitous. They have always assigned, as a motive for their cruelties of to-day, my *infallible* resentment of to-morrow ! They have never vouchsafed to make the trial whether it was not their presages, dictated by a stupid degree of timidity, or a cunning kind of hatred, that were void of foundation.

Here, a very fair opportunity, doubtless, presented itself. The uncorrupt and feeling heart of the King was moved at the remembrance of my distress. Whilst intrigue was bustling to dazzle his integrity, and calumny loquacious to mislead it ; it was watchful, it was eloquent in my favour : he was sensible that the punishment of those faults,

* See *Appel à la Postérité*, page 35.

whatever they might be, of which he at that time believed me guilty, ought not to be eternal. A secret prepossession, in favour of my innocence, had perhaps, even before this, rendered the virulence of his Counsellors suspicious: and, in spite of their efforts, he pronounced the all-powerful *Surge & ambula*, which put an end to my misfortunes.

Was not this the moment, if reason at least, for want of justice, if an enlightened policy had had any effect on the mind of the Ministers, to try what indulgence might have had upon mine; upon that untameable spirit, whose extravagant sallies they pretended to have been obliged to check by so exemplary a punishment? I have unceasingly repeated, in the thousand and one memorials which I breathed in sighs from the depths of the *Bastille*, that I knew my Country only by her rigours; and that I adored her. What would have been my idolatry, at that juncture when, renouncing every unjust prejudice, every cruel caprice, her sons should have met me with open arms; when to those sentiments, which her severities had not changed, I could have added that of gratitude for the earnest of one single act of kindness;* when, reinstated in the common privileges of the family, I might have said to myself: I have hitherto suffered from vexa-

* These words require an explanation that I cannot place amongst the Notes: it concerns me so nearly, that I would not have it go unnoticed.

Amongst the innumerable absurdities and falsehoods of

tious prejudices; let us endeavour to destroy them. I have been accused of obstinacy, and too much vehemence of temper; let us carry meekness

which my misfortunes, as usual, has rendered me the object, one has gone abroad, which I cannot pass by with neglect: it has been said, it has been written, it has been printed, that the claims of the *French* Ministry upon me were so much the stronger, as I had received from them *a pension of two thousand crowns*.

I am obliged to declare, that there never was a more impudent falsehood. It is unaccountable that it should have been hazarded, at any time posterior to the 27th of September, 1780, after what I had said in the preceding August, N^o. LIX. p. 296 in the *Annales*:

"There is only one of the Kings of *Europe* towards whom respect, attachment, and fidelity, on my part, can be considered as duties; one alone, from whom I MIGHT HAVE accepted benefactions without a blush, and without a scruple. Now, even of Him, I never asked, I never will ask, any thing but justice."

It is immaterial here what was the answer made to this demand: but it is clear that the man who held this language publickly, in a printed work, was not *pensioned*.

The only marks of attention which I have received from the *French* Ministry during my life have been three *lettres-de-cachet*; one for the *Bastille*, and two of *Exile*; of which the first was my punishment for having as Counsel defended M. *de Bellegarde*, who was at first solemnly condemned as guilty, and three years after, as solemnly acknowledged innocent.

The other affairs which I have treated, either as a Civilian, or merely as a Man of Letters, have not all been found worthy of such flattering distinctions: but there is not one of them, of which the success, so far as it respected me, was not embittered by the ingratitude of the Clients whom I saved, the prevarications of the Tribunals which I compelled to be just, the stupidity or the corruption of the men in place whom I unmasked. It cannot be imputed to self-sufficiency, when I declare, that neither the Bar, nor the Republic of Letters, have produced a man whose

and patience even to the extreme: let us try to dissipate fear, disarm hatred, and take away every pretext of uneasiness.

Rising from my sepulchre, my first movements tended to confirm these dispositions. Like another *Lasarus*, disencumbered of the grave-clothes which for twenty months had intercepted every motion of my tongue, and my heart, it was sensibility, it was the love of peace, it was *gratitude* that I announced. For five whole weeks I have not ceased to tender to these cowardly and implacable despots, my hands yet bleeding from the chains with which they had so long been loaded. I asked of them only the favour to try me, and I was not able to

life has been interspersed with anecdotes more incredible of this kind, from the Defence of the *Duc d'Aiguillon*, down to my Reflections on that of *M. de Lally*.

I will dare to go further, even though the charge of self-sufficiency should be brought against me, and the old cry of *egotism* revived: There has not been a writer whose zeal was more pure, whose soul more inaccessible to intrigue and personal influence, whose talents more exclusively devoted to the protection of justice, and the manifestation of truth: and this is sufficiently evident from the fruits they have yielded me.

Having spoken of the exile occasioned by the defence of *M. de Bellegarde*, I must render due homage to the generosity shewn by the Marshal *de Biron* on that occasion. He was chief of the Council of War which the *Lettre-de-cachet* seemed to avenge: he was extremely active in accelerating its revocation; and on my return, a very polite, a very flattering reception was the balm he poured into my wound.

Of Gallic Knights even such is the renown.

But this is apparently not the character of the *Literary* Knights, nor of the *Academic* Marshals.

obtain it ! they did not dare to believe my words were sincere. Unworthy to form a judgement of my heart, they imagined their *Lettres-de-cachet* a more powerful check than my delicacy : and while the enjoyment of a state of freedom, henceforward inviolably secured to me, is hardly a consolation for the price it costs me, they are congratulating themselves perhaps on the sagacity which enabled them to foretell the use *I should not fail* to make of it.

Away with these unseasonable retrospects and regrets ! Having been refused permission to convince the *French* Ministry of my resigned disposition, let us make use of the faculty they have forced me to assume, to unmask their injustice, and divulge their barbarity. The former is already sufficiently obvious : let us proceed to the detail of the latter ; and, if on the perusal of these Memoirs, some readers are tempted to say that no oppression has ever been upbraided with equal energy, let us force them in like manner to confess that none has ever been attended with equal cruelty.

[Collectanea Adamantæa.]



MEMOIRS OF THE BASTILLE.



[COLLECTANEA ADAMANTÆA.—IV.]

MEMOIRS
OF
THE BASTILLE.

Translated from the French

OF THE CELEBRATED

MR LINGUET,

WHO WAS IMPRISONED THERE FROM
SEPTEMBER 1780 TO MAY 1782.

Edited by

EDMUND GOLDSMID, F.R.H.S.

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MEMOIRS

OF

THE BASTILLE.

PART II.

SECTION III.

Of the Regimen of the Bastille.

I SHALL not at present touch on that tender question, of which the discussion would be more difficult than the solution could be useful; I shall not examine whether State-Prisons be necessary appendages to a Government; whether every Administration requires these fastnesses, removed without the pale, and withdrawn from the inspection, of the Laws; whether this spring, for the most part violent, and always dangerous, may be considered as an indispensable requisite in

machines which for their preservation sometimes stand in need of an extraordinary impulse ; whether, in fine, what is in France known by the strange appellation of a *Lettre-de cachet*, be an evil peculiar to that kingdom, like the plague in Egypt, the small-pox in Arabia, and those inundations of liquid fire in the countries infested by burning mountains? This problem is best resolved by facts ; and although such solution may not be admitted by humane philosophy, it is nevertheless adopted by universal policy.

We are unacquainted with a nation among whom this resource, or else some equivalent, has not been an engine in the hands of power. In the purest era of her liberty, Rome had her **DICTATORS**. The orders of this supreme magistrate bore an authority not inferior to that of a *Lettre-de-cachet*, since he disposed without appeal, and without responsibility, not only of the liberty, but even of the lives of the citizens.

In Sparta we may observe how State-policy extended still farther the bounds of despotism. The Kings themselves, that is to say, the Chiefs of the nation, bowed before it. The **EPHORI** had power to commit them to prison ; and though their warrant varied somewhat from a *Lettre-de-cachet*, yet, in its principle, it may be considered as essentially the same.

Nay, in that part of the world where the Govern-

ment is most closely watched and restrained, where the privileges of individuals are most effectually secured from the encroachments of arbitrary power; in London itself, we behold a TOWER destined for the reception of State-Criminals. The Parliament, that guardian of private, no less than of public freedom, not only sees without terror, a citadel that seems to threaten destruction to both, but even goes so far sometimes as to use it; and in so doing they are not thought to violate, nor yet to hazard the liberty of the People. (22.)

But a similar institution may appear to be far more excusable in France; where, the characters of men being more impetuous, the pretensions of different powers continually jarring with each other less circumscribed, and the regal authority neither limited nor ascertained, we may easily conceive, that on some occasions, it will be necessary to have a check, or kind of scare-crow to defend the prerogative of the Crown, if not of the Kingdom. But I once more observe, that this is a point which I do not pretend to examine: I am not to consider the legality of the institution, but the regimen, of the BASTILLE; I mean the exercise of its authority. Now its regimen is dreadful; it resembles nothing practised heretofore, or at this moment practised, in the known world. (23.)

If in one of those relations, which the ebullitions of imaginary travellers have multiplied of late years, we should read, that in an island of the southern hemisphere, which nature seems to have concealed from the rest of the globe, there exists a people, gay, mild, and frivolous, not only in their manners, but also in their most essential qualities, with a Government far from sanguinary; where the most serious affairs ever assume an air of pleasantry; and in whose capital notwithstanding, is kept with infinite care, an abyss, into which every citizen, without exception, is each moment liable to be hurled, and into which some are actually precipitated every day, in consequence of orders inevitable, as they are inexplicable; for which it is often impossible to divine the motive or the pretext:

That the unfortunate wretch thus vanished, finds himself detached from all the rest of mankind; farther removed from his relations, from his friends, and, what is worse than all, from justice, than if he had been transferred into another planet; that his cries and supplications are stifled in their passage, or at least, that only one channel is allowed for their issue; and that precisely the one most interested in suppressing them; a motive that must be prevalent, in proportion as the oppression is palpable and enormous:

That he is abandoned, at least for a consider-

able length of time, without books, without paper, to the torturing suspense of being entirely ignorant of what passes in the world, of the fate of his family, his fortune, his honour ; of what he has been, and of what he is to be accused ; torments which a perpetual solitude, undiverted by any kind of avocation, renders more intolerable :

That he has no other security for his life but the tenderness of his keepers, who notwithstanding the mark of honour attached to their habit, being capable of such meanness as to become for hire the base satellites of arbitrary power, would doubtless feel but little repugnance in undertaking an office still more base and barbarous, if it was required of them on the same terms : that he has therefore grounds to be apprehensive of poison in every dish that is served up to him : that every time his door is opened, the melancholy clang of the bolts and bars with which it is loaded, may seem to announce his death-warrant, or to notify the arrival of the mutes destined to perform the fatal office ; whilst he cannot derive the least motive to tranquility either from the consciousness of his innocence, or from the equity of the Sovereign ; since the first attack on the former, may be followed by a second ; since they have the same power over his life, as they exercise over his liberty ; since the same persons, who a thousand times a day lend their hands to his execution in a

moral sense, by virtue of a *Lettre-de-Cachet*, could not be supposed to refuse their assistance to accomplish the same purpose in a literal sense, when once commissioned by the same authority; and lastly, since in a place where all is mystery and sorrow, there is no enormity so atrocious, but may with as much ease be concealed as committed :

That, if he preserves his health, it is but an additional grievance, sensibility being then most exquisite, and privation more painful ; that if it gives way, as is generally the case, to the miseries of his situation, he is allowed neither relief nor comfort ; but must remain in that helpless and wretched condition ; perpetually agonised by reflecting on the impossibility of an escape, on the misfortunes that may happen to his family, the oblivion to which his name is in danger of being consigned ; by considering, that his ashes will be deprived of the last sad tribute of tenderness and affection ; that his end will perhaps be unknown ; and that his mistaken wife and children may be offering up vows and making efforts for his deliverance, long after the sepulchre, in which he was buried alive will contain no remains of him but his bones !

Should we find such a picture in the voyages of Cook, or Anson, what sort of impression would it make upon our minds ? Might we not take the

hor for an impostor ; or in felicitating ourselves on being natives of a country exempt from such a wretched servitude, should we not conceive a degree of contempt, mingled with horror, for a government so barbarous, and a People so abused ?

But alas ! it is the picture of no other than the BASTILLE, and that far from overcharged ! How awfully does it represent those tortures and agitated convulsions of the mind ; those perpetual agonies that eternise the pains of death, without affording its repose ; in short, all the punishments which the jailers of the Bastille can inflict, and which no stretch of human art can diminish !

The first article of their code is the impenetrable mystery with which all their operations are enveloped ; a mystery that goes so far, as not only leave people in doubt with regard to the place of residence, but even with regard to the life, of the unfortunate person who has slipped into their hands ; a mystery that is not confined to the interdiction of all communication, whence he might derive either comfort or amusement, but is carried to such extent, as to prevent it from being known with certainty where he is, or even whether he is still in existence.

A prisoner, whom an officer of the Bastille sees every day, will, when spoken of in the world,

be denied with consummate effrontery ever to have been seen or known by him. When some of my faithful friends solicited of the Minister who presides over these dungeons, permission to visit me, he asked, as it were, with astonishment, how they could suppose me to be in the Bastille? The Governor has often sworn to several of them, on his word and honour as a Gentleman, that I was no longer confined there, and that I had not been detained there above eight days; for the public notoriety of my apprehension, and the care they had taken to have it executed by broad day-light and in the open street, would not permit him to maintain, as without doubt he otherwise would have done, that I had never entered the walls of the prison.

Thus a porter will often declare a falsehood at his master's gate, in obedience to his orders: but this is merely to prevent importunate visits; his falsehoods have an end, either of utility or convenience; he neither maintains them with an affected air of sincerity, nor with oaths: and, notwithstanding, his employ is thought a vile one. What then must be that of a Minister, of a Governor of the Bastille, who deceives but to torment, and whose falsehoods are productive of nothing but affliction?

I should be glad to be informed, what can be the design of all this affectation of mystery, in

leaving the public at large, friends, relations doubtful of the very being of a man whom they have ravished from them? it cannot be to facilitate the means of convicting him, and to render his punishment the more certain: for, first, this clandestine custody can be of no avail to those who are employed against him elsewhere, either to carry on the prosecution, or to execute the sentence pronounced upon him: secondly, my example proves, that the Bastille often contains prisoners whom they not only never intend to prosecute, but whom they have not wherewithal to arraign; and it is precisely these, whom they are most assiduous to cover with a veil of darkness. I repeat it once more, what can the design be?

The express institution of this prison being to distract the mind, and to render life itself miserable, (as one of my tormentors ingenuously acknowledged; a man, who, though honoured with the order of St. Louis, had not virtue enough to shudder at the idea of so horrid a function;) I conceive that this dreary solitude, this absolute ignorance in which they keep a prisoner with respect to what has been done, is actually doing, or is about to be done, either for or against him, are means admirably adapted to the end proposed. Nothing can be contrived or imagined more effectual to lead a man through each gradation of despair;

particularly, if he has the misfortune to be endowed with one of those lofty and active souls, which are apt to be shocked with a virtuous indignation at injustice, to which employment is a want, and suspense a punishment. But why make partakers of his torments, friends and relations, whom they pretend not to associate in his afflictions?

When a process is established, there is at least this alleviation; that the nature and extent of the accusation is known, the progress of the proceedings regular and open; the victim is not lost to view, till his sacrifice, or his triumph. Disquiet has its bounds, and grief its consolation.

But here, whilst the wretch removed from every eye accuses his family and friends of neglecting him, they are trembling lest their remembrance of him should be imputed to them as a crime: his captivity depending on caprice, and his chains being liable to be knocked off every moment, or to be perpetuated without end, each day is to those who long to see him, as it is to the unfortunate man himself, a complete period, in which they exhaust all the anguish of suspense, all the horrors of privation: in the morning their tears flow on the recollection of his sufferings, and in the evening on the anticipation of what he is yet to suffer; while it is impossible for them to conceive when they will terminate; or, if the imagina-

tion should attempt to fix their bounds, it is but a preparation of renovated misery.

The Tyrant, who first founded this prison, had his view in so horrid an institution; which was to get rid, with all possible privacy, of such persons as the executioners themselves would refuse to assassinate. When he had once prescribed an innocent person, for the innocent only are proscribed, whilst the guilty are judged, he wished to have the epoch of his death unknown, that he might fix it precisely at the very moment most agreeable to his interest or his vengeance.

But Lewis XVI. is not Lewis XI. the one is as humane, as the other was barbarous: the one respects as much justice and the laws, recommends and enjoins as urgently the observation of them, as the other took delight in having them trampled on, and giving himself the example of the violation. Whence then does it arrive, that the humanity of Lewis XVI. connives at the continuance of an institution invented by the tyranny of Lewis XI? How comes it, that under a Prince to whom law is sacred, and the blood of mankind precious, his subjects are liable to the same catastrophe, as they were under a Sovereign, to whom an execution was a favourite amusement, who called the executioner his *Cousin*, and never went abroad but under the escort of a Satellite, another of his cousins, but more savage and

more sanguinary than all the executioners together?

Further, if it was the enormity of the crime, or the rank of the delinquent, that should require this strange and perilous concealment; if this funeral veil was thrown only over those whom the magnitude of their offences had devoted to immediate punishment, or over those who, given to intrigue and cabal, might be formidable from their birth, their riches or their connexions; there would be some excuse, or at least some pretext for it.

But the Bastille, like death, brings to an equality all whom it swallows up: the sacrilegious villain, who has plotted the destruction of his Country; the undaunted Patriot, guilty of no other crime but that of maintaining her rights with too much ardour; the wretch, who has betrayed for gold the secrets of the cabinet, and he who has dared to speak truths to Ministers, useful to the State, but repugnant to their interest: as well he who is confined lest he should become a dishonour to his family, as he who is only obnoxious on account of his talents, are all overwhelmed alike in uniform darkness.

And, let it be considered well; this darkness is double: it prevents them from seeing, no less than from being seen: it not only deprives the prisoner of the knowledge of everything that

personally interests him, of the power of inspecting the state of his private affairs of preventing either by definitive or provisional arrangements his own ruin, and sometimes that of his correspondents; and, above all, that of informing his friends, and confuting his enemies; in short, of every kind of useful occupation: but it also covers from his sight the view of public affairs, and every thing else that might have a tendency to amuse or divert his solitude. Become an outcast from society he is not permitted even to know what is going forward in the world. There may perhaps be in these dungeons, a man, who is daily soliciting with his prayers Lewis XV. and the Duke *de la Villière*; he thinks them still the living forgers of his chains: he is incessantly on his knees before the images of those two persons, of whom nothing remains at present but the memory; and the officers of the prison, witnesses of his error, are so stupidly reserved, or so cruelly scrupulous, as not to acquaint him with it.

From this total ignorance of what is, and what is not, there results an infinity of effects calamitous to the deceived and unfortunate prisoner. For example, if he has been sacrificed to the personal vengeance of a man in power, he has not the consolation of beholding the fall of a colossus, whose elevation has been fatal to him. Neither can he take the advantage of it, since it is a

circumstance which he is entirely uninformed of : and, if he has not very zealous friends ; if his family is timid or obscure, indifferent or disaffected to him ; the oppression still subsists, although the oppressor is no more. The successor turns his thoughts rather to the exertion of the same authority, than to remove the evils it has occasioned. The prisoner continues immured in the Bastille, not because it is intended that he should remain there ; but because he is there, because he is forgotten ; because interest is not made at the proper offices ; and because nothing equals the difficulty of getting out of that murderous pit, except the facility of falling into it.

I can produce an example, besides my own, and that without calling any one into question. Whilst I was in the Bastille there was a native of Geneva, by name *Pellisseri*, confined there. His sole crime was, having made some remarks on Mr. Necker's operations in the finance department. When I was by a very extraordinary accident informed of it, he had already been three years in the prison. Probably he is there still ; and knows neither of the ruin of his Country, nor that of the Minister, whom he justly accuses of his own. There too perhaps he will continue, till chance, or possibly the mention I now make of him, may recall his memory to the minds of those moveable masters, who can over-rule the

immobility of the Bastille : perhaps they will at length be sensible how shocking it is to humanity and justice, that the name of the STATE should give a sanction to perpetuate the personal vengeance of a temporary Minister ; that a stranger, an honest man, should be punished, for having been so enlightened, as to foresee what the Government should before have been well apprised of. For after all, what remains of the operations of Mr. Necker ? If Mr. *Pelisseri* has been culpable in censuring them, what must those be who have destroyed them ? (24)

Can one reflect without shuddering, that the horrors I am now tracing have been the reward of an indiscretion, which a few months later would have been an action, not only of prudence, but of necessity ? The panegyrist of Mr. Necker would, doubtless, in the present state of affairs, soon be made a fellow-captive with his accuser : thus, whilst a despotism unrestrained by shame, multiplies at its discretion the victims of these dangerous and inconclusive speculations, their cries and supplications die away in the inaccessible avenues of the prison.

Again, let it be observed, that, as nothing can get admission, so nothing can find its way out of it : the very attempts which a prisoner may hazard, to procure, by means of his friends or patrons, either a pardon or a trial are intercepted

and smothered : should he be so indiscreet as to hint the quarter from which he may look for succour, the blood-hounds of the Police hasten to block up the passage, and to obstruct the efforts that be undertaken in his favour. They never leave it in his power to solicit those who are in a capacity to make interest for him, until he has exhausted, to the last drop, the bitter draught which despotism and hatred have prepared for him.

His letters, when he is allowed the means of writing, pass open to the *Police*, or are there broke open. The doleful lamentations of the captives afford no small amusement to the persons appointed to inspect them : they divert themselves for a short time with the various notes of the different birds they have in their cage, and then tie up carefully in a bundle together the several epistolary productions of the day ; not to be applied to any use, but either to deposit them in some hidden magazine, or to burn them : and neither the persons who wrote them, nor those to whom they are addressed, ever see them or hear of them afterwards.

In the commencement of my captivity I resolved on imploring the favour of the Princes of the Blood Royal. Having been beforehand informed, that *Monsieur* and the Count *d' Artois* honoured me with their esteem, I flattered myself that they

would extend their bounty to me in my misfortunes. I consequently wrote to them, and sealed up the letters. Some time after, I was informed by the Lieutenant of the *Police*, that he had read my letters, but had not delivered them ; that he had not authority to do it. On which I observed, that, as he knew the substance, he might make those noble Princes, from whom they were withheld, acquainted with it. To this he replied, that he had not access to men of their high rank. So a person not deemed worthy of approaching these great men, was allowed the liberty of opening their letters, of suppressing them, of rendering their good intentions and those of the King futile ; in fine, of raising around me ramparts more insurmountable than all the magic castles, with which imagination has filled the regions of romance !

Let us now enter into the inside of these ramparts : let us now examine how those three-headed monsters, who guard them, act in the accomplishment of their abominable office, to render life an insupportable burthen.

The prelude to their operations, when a fresh victim is brought to them, is the *Search*. Their mode of taking possession of a prisoner's person, and their manner of shewing him the infernal property in which he will be held, is first to strip him of all his own. He is no less astonished, than

alarmed, to find himself delivered up to the searching and groping of four men, whose appearance is enough to belye their functions, and yet does but add to their infamy ; of four men decorated with a uniform, which must give one cause to expect decency of conduct, with insignia, I repeat once more, which one would suppose to denote an *honourable* service.

They take away his money, lest it should afford the means of corruption amongst them ; his jewels, on the very same consideration ; his papers, lest they should furnish him with a resource against the weariness and vexation to which he is doomed ; his knives, scissors, &c. least he should cut his own throat, say they, or assassinate his jailors : for they explain to him coolly the motives for all their depredations. After this ceremony, which is long, and often interrupted by pleasantries and remarks on every article in the inventory, they drag him to the cell destined for his reception.

These cells are all contained in Towers, of which the walls are at least twelve, and at the bottom thirty or forty feet thick. Each has a vent-hole made in the wall ; but crossed by three grates of iron, one within, another in the middle, and a third on the outside. The bars cross each other, and are an inch in thickness ; and by a refinement of invention in the persons who con-

trived them, the solid part of each of these meshes answers exactly to the vacuity in another ; so that a passage is left to the sight, of scarcely two inches, though the intervals are near four inches square.

Formerly each of these caves had three or four openings, small indeed, and ornamented with the same gratings. But this multiplicity of holes was soon found to promote the circulation of their air ; they prevented humidity, infection, &c. A humane Governor therefore had them stopped up ; and at present there remains but one, which on very fine days just admits light enough into the cell to make "darkness visible."

So in winter these dungeons are perfect ice-houses, because they are lofty enough for the frost to penetrate ; in summer they are moist, suffocating stoves, to the walls being too thick for the heat to dry them.

Several of the cells, and mine was of the number, are situated upon the ditch into which the common sewer of the *Rue St. Antoine* empties itself ; so that whenever it is cleared out, or in summer after a few days continuance of the hot weather, or after an inundation, which is frequent enough both spring and autumn in ditches sunk below the level of the river, there exhales a most infectious, pestilential vapour : and when it has once entered those pidgeon-holes they call rooms,

it is a considerable sime before they are cleared of it.

Such is the atmosphere a prisoner breathes : there in order to prevent a total suffocation, is he obliged to pass his days, and often his nights, stuck up against the interior grate, which keeps him from sproaching, as described above, too close to the hole cut in the form of a window ; the only orifice through which he can draw his scanty portion of air and of light. His efforts to suck a little fresh through this narrow tube serve often but to encrease around him the fetid odour, with which he is on the point of being suffocated.

But woe to the unfortunate wretch, who in winter cannot procure money to pay for the firing, which they distribute in the *King's name* ! Formerly a proper quantity was supplied for the consumption of each prisoner, without equivalent, and without measure. They were not used to cavil with men in every other respect deprived of all, and subjected to so cruel a privation of exercise, on the quantity of fire requisite to rarefy their blood coagulated by inaction, and to volatise the vapours condensed upon their walls. It was the will of the Sovereign, that they should enjoy the benefit of this solace, or this refreshment, unrestrained as to the expence.

The intention, without doubt, is still the same : yet is the custom altered. The present Governor

has limited the proportion for each prisoner to six billets of wood, *great or small*. It is well known, that in Paris the logs for chamber use are but half the market size, being sawed through the middle: they are no more than eighteen inches in length. The œconomical purveyor is careful to pick out in the timber-merchants' yards the very smallest he can find, and, what is as incredible as it is true, the very worst. He chuses in preference those at the bottom of the piles, which are exhausted by time and moisture of all their salts, and for that reason thrown aside to be sold at an inferior price to the brewers, bakers, and such other trades as require a fire rather clear than substantial. Six of those logs, or rather sticks, make the allowance of four and twenty hours for an inhabitant of the Bastille.

It may be asked, what they do when this allowance is exhausted? They do as the honourable Governor advises them; they put up with their sufferings. (25)

The articles of furniture are worthy of the light by which they are exhibited, and the apartments they serve to decorate. I must first observe, that the Governor contracts with the Ministry to supply them; and this is one of the trifling perquisites attached to his immense revenue, which I shall take notice of presently. He may frame excuses for himself, with regard to the inconveniences of

the prison, because he cannot change the situation of places ; he may palliate the niggardly distribution of wood, under the pretext of saving the King's money. But on the head of furniture, which is entirely his own affair, and for which he is paid, he can have neither excuse nor palliation : his parsimony in this particular is at the same time both cruel and dishonest.

Two mattresses half eaten by the worms, a matted elbow chair, the bottom of which was kept together by pack-thread, a tottering table, a water pitcher, two pots of Dutch ware, one of which served to drink out of, and two flag-stones to support the fire, composed the inventory of mine. I was indebted only to the commiseration of the turnkey, after several months confinement, for a pair of tongs and a fire-shovel. I could not possibly procure dog-irons ; and whether it may be considered as the effect of policy, or want of feeling, what the Governor does not think proper to furnish, he will not suffer the prisoner to provide at his own expence. It was eight months ere I could gain permission to purchase a tea-pot ; twelve before I could procure a chair tolerably steady and convenient ; and fifteen ere I was allowed to replace, by a vessel of common ware, the clumsy and disgusting pewter machine they had assigned me.

The sole article I was allowed to *purchase* in

the beginning of my imprisonment, was a new blanket; and the manner by which I obtained this privilege was as follows.

It is well known that in the month of September the moths which prey upon woollen stuffs are transformed into butterflies. On the opening of the cave into which I was introduced, there arose from the bed, I will not say a number, or a cloud, but a large thick column, of these insects, which instantly overspread the whole chamber. The sight caused me to start back with horror; when I was consoled by one of my conductors with the assurance, *that before I had lain there two nights, there would not be one left.*

In the evening the Lieutenant of the Police came according to custom, to bid me welcome; when I expressed such a violent dislike to a flock-bed so full of incumbents, that they were graciously pleased to *permit* me to put on a new covering, and to have the mattress beaten, all at *my own expence*. As feather-beds are entirely prohibited in the Bastille, doubtless because they are considered as too great a luxury for persons to whom the Ministry wish to give a lesson of mortification, I was very desirous that every three months my miserable mattress should be suffered to undergo the same kind of renovation. Yet the proprietary Governor opposed it with all his might notwithstanding it would have cost him nothing; "for,"

said he, "we must not use them to too much indulgence."

Madam de Staal informs us, that she got her room lined with tapestry. Whether she owed this condescension to her quality as the favourite of a great Princess, or to the manners of the age, which retained even in the Bastille some tincture of humanity, as may be inferred from other circumstances in her relation, I shall not take upon me to determine. Thus much is certain; that all these indulgences are now considered as abuses, which were to be retrenched by the stern regularity of modern times. My urgent applications, to obtain at my own expence either some cloth to absorb the moisture of the walls, or paper, whence I might have derived the same benefit, with the further amusement of pasting it on myself, were made and repeated to no effect.

In my chamber these walls had a most dismal appearance. One of my predecessors, whether a painter by profession, or one who cultivated the art for his amusement, got leave to daub over the apartment, after a manner; and he at any rate had the satisfaction not to be so totally excluded from every thing to employ his hands, or occupy his attention. The chamber is an octagon, with four large and four small sides: they are all lined with pictures very suitable to

the place ; namely, the representation of our Saviour's sufferings.

But whether through choice, or because they would allow him but the one colour adapted to the subject and the apartment, he had done them all in oker ; whence their gloomy uniformity may be easily imagined. After the flight of the butterflies, when I cast my eyes on those pannels, which the obscurity of the chamber rendered still more dismal, and could discern nothing but figures of grief, punishment and execution, without distinguishing the particular subject ; what we have heard of the *Oubliettes*, what we know of the *Sambenitos*, instantly recurred to my imagination : and I firmly believed, that those figures were so many emblems of the lot which awaited me, and that they had put me in this dungeon to prepare me for it. I commended myself to the mercy of the Almighty. Souls endued with sensibility ! judge of the horrors of the moment.

Thus provided as to furniture and lodging, if the captives were but allowed the privilege granted to the convicts in such prisons as are under the direction of *justice* alone, that is to say, an intercourse with each other, the means of conversing and forming connexions, which the necessity of other situations may excuse, even between the honest man and one of an opposite character, but which in the Bastille might often be founded

on reciprocal esteem ; though they would still be sensible of their distress, yet would they become the more capable of supporting it. There are certain liquors, which when separately taken are disgusting, but when mixed are rendered more agreeable to the palate. It is the same with misfortunes. But it is precisely this amalgamation of sighs, that the officers of the Bastille are so assiduous to prevent ; what a prisoner might contrive to diminish of his sorrows, would be so much retrenched from their enjoyments. They might aptly take for a device, Caligula's address to the executioners whom he employed : *Strike so as to make him feel his death !*

From the moment a man is delivered into their hands, he is lost, as I observed before, to the whole universe : he exists only for them ; for they are no less careful to prevent all correspondedce within among their victims, than they are to exclude all communication from without. *La Porte*, and others, speak of an intercourse which they had with each other, by means of chimnies, &c.

Again let me observe, that it might have been the case in their time ; but at present the tunnels of the chimnies are traversed, like the windows, by three iron grates, one above another ; the first of which is at the distance of three feet from the hearth ; and the mouths of the chimnies are raised

several feet above the roof: the privies, a very rare accomodation, for I believe there are only two rooms in the whole prison provided with them, are secured with the same kind of grating: many of the rooms are vaulted; the others are covered with a double cieling.

When they think proper to order a prisoner down stairs, whether for an interrogatory, if he be so fortunate as to obtain one; or to attend the Physician, if not so ill as to be under the necessity of being visited in his cell; or for the sham exercise of a walk, which I shall notice presently; or merely through the caprice of the Governor; he finds all silent, desert and obscure. The dismal croaking of the turn-key, by whom he is guided, serves as a signal for all to disappear, who might either see, or be seen by him. The windows of that part of the building where the principal officers hold their latent residence, of the kitchens, and of those parts where strangers are admitted, shield themselves instantly with curtains, lattices and blinds; and they have the cruelty not to proceed to this operation till he is in a situation to perceive it. Everything is thus calculated to remind him, that within a few paces of him there are men; such perhaps as it would be the highest gratification for him to see, since they are so extremely anxious to conceal them: so that the torture is increasing in proportion to his curiosity;

his agonies are multiplied in proportion to his attachments.

For a long time I imagined, that I had for a fellow-prisoner, a Person whose safety alone would have been a solace sufficient to counterbalance all my other misfortunes, and whose apprehension, had they been able to effect it, would have been the completion of them. The answers that my interrogatories on this head extorted, were calculated only to confirm my suspicions: for these refiners on the art of tormenting, never fail, when they can find an opportunity, to blend an habitual silence, which puzzles and distracts you, with a simulated sincerity, which drives you to despair; whether they speak or are silent, you are sure to suffer no less from their freedom than from their reserve.

It is by these manœuvres that father and son, husband and wife, nay a whole parentage, may at once be inhabitants of the Bastille, without so much as suspecting themselves to be surrounded by objects so dear to them; or may languish there in the persuasion, that one common distress envelops the whole race, though a part may have been fortunate enough to escape it. When a Governor of St. Domingo took in his head, a few years back, to rid himself one morning of the Courts of justice, and to pack all the officers together in a vessel for France, immediately on

their arrival, this whole American Parliament were lodged in the Bastille.

There these poor men found the servitude more oppressive than that of their own negroes : their confinement lasted eight months ; during which not one knew what was become of the others. At length they were tried, and declared innocent : and all the indemnification they got, was permission to return, and resume their employments !

But if they are so careful to hinder the captives from having the slightest intercourse, or even the most distant knowledge of each other, they are not so scrupulous of making them acquainted that they are not alone in misfortune. Those double floors, those vaulted roofs, impervious to consolation, are sure indexes to point out to the wretched prisoner, that there is, above or below him, another wretch, whose condition is no less lamentable than his own. The doors, the keys, the bolts, are not silent : the creaking of the first, the clattering of the second, and the hollow jarring of the last, resound from afar along those flights of stone that form the stair-case, and echo dreadfully in the vast vacuity of the towers. Hence it was easy for me to compute the number of my neighbours ; and this was a fresh source of sorrowful reflexion.

To be sensible that you have over your head, or under your feet, an afflicted being, on whom you

might confer, or with whom you might participate, comfort ; to hear him walk, sigh ; to reflect that he is but three feet distant : to consider the pleasure there would be in breaking through that narrow space, together with the impossibility of effecting it ; to have cause for affliction, no less from the bustle that announces the arrival of a new comer, who is to partake of, without alleviating your bondage, than from the silence of the dungeons, that gives you notice of the happier lot of your former companions in misery, are punishments beyond what the imagination can conceive : they are those of Tantalus, Ixion, and Sisyphus, united.

But this anxiety is sometimes still more horrible. I am convinced that my fellow-captive in the chamber below mine died during my imprisonment ; though I cannot say whether his death was natural, or inflicted. It happened, one morning about two o'clock, that I heard a prodigious uproar upon the stair-case : a vast number of people were ascending the stairs in a tumultuous manner, and advanced no farther than the door of that chamber : they seemed there to be engaged in much bustle and dispute, and to be running frequently backwards and forwards : I heard very distinctly repeated struggles and groans.

Now was this an act of succour, or an assassination ? Was it the introduction of a Physician, or

an Executioner? I know not: but three days after, about the same hour in the morning, I heard, at the same door, a noise less violent: I thought I could distinguish the carrying up, the setting down, the filling, and the shutting of a coffin: these ceremonies were succeeded by a strong smell of juniper. In another place these proceedings would not have caused so much alarm: but judge what an impression must they not have made, *in the Bastille*; at such an hour, and at so small a distance!

Whilst the regimen of the Bastille places by these means, and by others which I shall advert to presently, the life of every one thrown into it, in the hands of his keepers; it will also have his fate dependent on them alone. They are conscious, and it is one of their principal enjoyments, that their regimen is productive of nothing but despair: they are well aware, that there are moments, when such in particular of their victims, as have not had their courage awed by crimes, or their sensibility enervated by habitual slavery, would be tempted to put an end, by a transitory pang, to so tedious a succession of agonies: and that is precisely what they labour to prevent. They are even more apprehensive lest one of their captives should evade the torments they inflict on him, by death, than by any escape. This *Phalaris* of a Governor is, above all, anxious that his prisoners may feel

to the utmost the fiery tortures of his *bull*; and, by an art peculiar to the Bastille, the multifarious precautions, which they adopt in order to obviate this pretended danger, are no less humiliating than painful; are as fit to foment a desire of the catastrophe, which they are calculated to prevent, as they are to hinder the execution of it.

I observed that a prisoner was not permitted to have scissors, knife, or razors. Thus, when they serve him with provision, repelled by his sighs and watered by his tears, it is necessary that the Turn-key cut every morsel for him. For this purpose he makes use of a knife rounded at the point, which he is careful to put up in his pocket, after each dissection.

One cannot prevent the nails from shooting out, or the hair from growing. But a prisoner has no means of getting rid of these incumbrances without undergoing a fresh humiliation: he must request the loan of a pair of scissors; the Turn-key stands by while he is using them, and carries them off immediately after.

As to the beard, it is the Surgeon's business to shave; and this office he performs twice a week. He and the Turn-key, Agent, or Super-intendant to all that passes in the Tower, carefully watch that the hand of the prisoner does not approach too near the formidable instrument: like the axe of the Executioner, it is developed only at the

moment of using it. They still remember, in the Bastille, the disturbance occasioned there by the temerity of Mr. *Lally* ; though at a time when he little suspected his impending fate. He one day got hold of a razor, and in a jocular manner refused to give it up. That did not indicate any very desperate design ; nevertheless the alarm-bell resounded throughout the castle. The guard was put under arms, and twenty bayonets pointed towards the chamber : perhaps they were even preparing the cannon ; when peace was restored by the return of the dreadful tool into its case.

It is futile and ridiculous to urge the pretence, that this circumspection of theirs has for its object the security of the keepers, no less than that of the captives. What can be dreaded from a man loaded with such heavy chains, hemmed in by so many walls, encompassed by so many guards, and watched with so much attention ? But whatever their motive for being afraid to leave him so miserable a resource, it is evident that it is despair they are the most apprehensive of. Now they know that this despair is the consequence only of their own re-iterated tortures ; and they disarm his hands, merely to have it in their power to rend his heart with impunity.

I have often mentioned the *Turn-keys*, without explaining the nature of their office. They are the subaltern officers of the castle, and have charge

of all that relates to the service of the prisoners. This indeed is but trifling; for all they have to do is, to distribute the provisions throughout the cages within their respective districts. They visit them thrice a day, at seven o'clock in the morning, at eleven, and at six in the afternoon: those are the hours of breakfast, of dinner and supper. They are closely watched, lest they should make a longer stay than is requisite to deposit their burthen: thus in the twenty-four ages that compose a day, or rather a night, in the Bastille, a prisoner has but these three short reliefs.

The turn-keys are not even required to make the beds, or to sweep out the rooms. The reason assigned for it, is, that in the execution of this business they might be ill-treated, or perhaps assassinated. The justice of this pretext admits an enquiry; the thing itself is certain. Neither age, nor infirmity, nor delicacy of sex, can exempt the prisoners from this necessity; the man of letters, unaccustomed to these operations, and the opulent man no less unacquainted with them, are equally obliged to submit to the same etiquette.

The turn-keys indeed do not invariably conform to it: they sometimes render services that cannot be exacted of them. But they must do it with as much secrecy, as if they were holding an illicit correspondence with an enemy: the Fury disguised in the form of a Governor, who will take

the alarm if he cannot hear, as he passes by the dungeons, the groans or lamentations of his captives, would quickly punish them for their ill-timed lenity.

It is in this total silence, I must again repeat it, in this general desolation, in this void existence more cruel than death, since it does not exclude grief, but rather engenders every kind of grief ; it is in this universal abstraction, it cannot be repeated too often, that what is called a Prisoner of State in the Bastille, that is, a man who has displeased a Minister, a Clerk in office, or a Valet, is given up without resource, without any other diversion but his own thoughts or his alarms, to the most bitter sentiment that can agitate a heart yet undegraded by criminality, to that of oppressed innocence, which foresees its destruction without the possibility of a vindication : it is thence that he may fruitlessly implore the succour of the laws, the communication of what he is accused of, the interference of his friends : his prayers, his supplications, his groans are not only uttered in vain ; but they are even acknowledged by his tyrants to be useless : and this is the only information they vouchsafe him. Abandoned to all the horror of listlessness, of inaction, he is daily sensible of the approaching close of his existence ; and he is at the same time sensible, that they prolong it only to prolong his punishment. Derision and insult are

added to cruelty, in order to increase the bitterness of privation.

For instance, at the end of about eight months, I conceived the idea of eluding the tedious hours of my confinement by a recollection of my past mathematical studies. I accordingly applied for a case of instruments; and took care to limit the size to *three inches*, in order to obviate all pretext for a refusal. This favour I was obliged to solicit for the space of two months; perhaps a Cabinet Council, was convened to consider of it. It was at length granted: the case arrived—but without compass. On signifying my disappointment at it, they informed me coolly, that *arms* are prohibited in the Bastille.

I had to solicit afresh, to petition, to memorialise, to discuss seriously the difference between a mathematical case of instruments and a cannon. After another month, thanks to the charity and to the invention of the Commissary, the compasses were brought. But in what fashion?—made of bone. Of such substance had they fabricated, at my expence, all that in a case of instruments should be made of steel.

I still preserve this new-fashioned piece of geometrical apparatus. After having kept it as the ornament of my study whilst I live, I shall be careful that after my death it shall be consigned to some magazine, or museum, where it may not

be at a loss for spectators. It will there hold a distinguished place amidst the monuments of barbarian industry, of which travellers sometimes favour us with a sample. No invention of the most ingenious among the savage tribes can be more deservedly an object of public curiosity.

In consequence of that principle, that the man, on whom the King, or rather the Minister, has thus laid his hand, must become invisible without redemption, they have resolved that the existence of the prisoners should be confided in the hands of those who are employed to secrete them; in order to render their underhand, clandestine practices consistent. The Governor finds them in provisions by contract, and gains an immense profit by a kind of regal sixpenny ordinary.

Government has founded fifteen places in the Bastille, the salaries of which are paid, whether they are occupied or not at the rate of ten French livres, or eight shillings English *per diem*. Hence the Governor of the castle draws a revenue of near 2500*l. per annum*.

But that is not all: in drawing up a *Lettre-de cachet*, which gives him a new Boarder, they add to the primitive foundation so much *per head*, proportioned to the quality of each respective rank. Thus, a Plebeian, or one of the lowest order, brings to the general mess, over and above the pistole allowed on the establishment, half a crown

extraordinary *per diem* ; a Tradesman, or Civilian of the ordinary class, four shillings ; a Priest, a Financier, or a common Judge, eight shillings ; a Counsellor in Parliament, twelve shillings ; a Lieutenant-General in the army, a Guinea ; and a Marshal of France, a Guinea and a half. In this Ministerial *cadastre* (27) I know not the rate allotted for a Prince of the Blood Royal.

They have, besides, granted to the Governor the privilege of stowing in his vaults near an hundred butts of wine free of all duties. This is no inconsiderable object, and, it should seem, would render it the easier for him to provide for his lodgers in a handsome manner.

But let us see how far it is attended with such effect. He sells this indemnity to a Publican of Paris, named *Joli*, for two hundred and fifty pounds sterling ; and takes in exchange the very worst kind of wines, for the prisoners' consumption ; which wine we may justly suppose, is no better than vinegar. He considers the establishment of eight shillings *per* day as part of the income attached to his office, which he is to give no account of, and which has nothing to do with the reckoning on the head of subsistence. On this he employs only the extraordinary surplus, which the liberality of the Sovereign destined merely to augment it ; and this very surplus he is careful not entirely to expend. The detail of

these particulars is rather ignoble : nevertheless, it is extremely requisite they be made known. There are prisoners in the Bastille, who at a meal are not allowed above four ounces of meat. These portions have been weighed more than once. The inferior Officers know the fact, and lament it. (28) Nothing could be more easily verified, if the Minister would shield from the resentment of their chief, the Subalterns who might disclose his sordid peculation.

There were some tables, indeed, better supplied ; and mine, I allow was of the number. But is this abundance a good, or an evil, to those whom it is granted ? This is a question I cannot answer with precision. Though it carries, a more honourable appearance, perhaps it may conceal some dangerous artifice. I have known several who during their confinement in the Bastille have lived on milk alone : others, as Mr. *De la Bourdonnaie*, have solicited and obtained permission to be served with provisions from their own houses. They constantly refused me this privilege, and even, for the first eight months, that of buying any article whatever, as I have already observed, although I had money deposited in the hands of the Officers.

I made amends for this, by the most scrupulous attention to eat but little of every dish ; to wash several times whatever had a suspicious appear-

ance : yet, notwithstanding all these precautions, I could not entirely escape what I dreaded with too much reason. The eighth day of my confinement I was seized with a cholic and a vomiting of blood, to which I was afterwards ever subject ; a disorder, of which the re-iterated attacks indicated the frequent renewal of the cause.

On this subject I was neither doubtful nor silent. I wrote an hundred times to the Lieutenant-General of the Police, that they were giving me poison. I declared the same thing verbally to his substitute ; I declared it to the Physician, to the Surgeon, to the officers themselves of the Castle : all the answer I could ever get was an insulting laugh.

“ If they wished to poison you, how comes it “ that you are still alive ? ” many persons have said, when I recounted these extraordinary symptoms ; and the same objections may now perhaps be suggested by my readers : but a little reflection will quickly do it away. No, most assuredly ; I never could have survived the murderers design, had it been that of Government, of the Minister : but my present existence, which I impute to the strength of my constitution justifies him alone. Can we suppose that hands, which would be ready to execute so base a villainy, if he was capable of requiring it, would have virtue

to resist a lucrative solicitation from another quarter ?

By the unaccountable regimen, of which we are speaking, nothing that may serve either to amuse or to console a prisoner is allowed to approach him ; but whatever may contribute either to afflict his mind, or to injure his health, finds no such difficulty of admittance. There are four officers of the higher order ; the inferior order consists of four Turn-keys ; and the kitchen is provided with the same number of Cooks or Scullions. These twelve persons are well informed whom they serve, notwithstanding the ridiculous affectation, with which it is pretended to keep them in ignorance of it : they are all permitted to go out, and to mix every day with the inhabitants of the city : there they have houses, wives, friends, acquaintance. Is it so difficult a matter, then, to find a single villain in a society whose office is but a tissue of flagitious actions ? or is it more so for him, who is once suborned, to discern what part he is to give the mortal blow to, since he is not denied access to any ? But we cannot suppose them capable of such horrible barbarity ! Could we suppose them capable of those already described ?

So far is this danger from being imaginary, that they formerly posted in the kitchen a centinel, whose business it was to examine, and keep

account of all who approached the fire-places, or the stoves. This precaution, still more salutary than offensive, has for some years back been omitted : are the evil designs, the practicability of which it clearly indicated, become more difficult to perpetrate ?

That, of which I was the object, was not consummated : but the loudness of my complaints might have disconcerted the plan, and my cares in part may have rendered it fruitless. I do not mean to suggest, that all those to whom I revealed my suspicions on this head, were accomplices in the crimes by which they were occasioned. The real guilty person was perhaps afraid to verify too quickly my apprehensions, lest an enquiry should be the result of it. The habitual weakness under which I languished, the imminent danger I was in at the close of 1781, my death being then considered as inevitable, might have induced them to relax in their endcavours, and to think all attempts of that tendency superfluous.

But even supposing I was mistaken in the cause I assigned for events, the ill effects of which I still carry about me ; allowing these apprehensions and symptoms to have been merely the product of an imagination disordered through too much susceptibility ; is it not shocking that the confinement of the Bastille should be calculated to produce fears of that nature, by rendering it

impossible for a prisoner to avoid those secret machinations which give rise to the dread he labours under?

After all, this dispute is merely verbal. I will admit, that in a place, where the Italian *Exili* (29) kept about a century ago a school for poisoning, they have not preserved any one of his receipts; and that a single additional cruelty may be repugnant to men, whose office, I repeat again, is the continual perpetration of cruelties: but will not a residence of twenty months, with all its concomitant evils, in a place where existence is but a repetition of tortures worse than death, essentially impair the source of life? Will near two years passed in these dungeons, without air, without exercise, in all the horrors of listlessness, in all the anguish of suspense, or rather of despair, make less impression on the vital organs, than the most efficacious poison? It may be slower: but is it less certain? Between these two methods of destroying, what difference is there but the time?

But are they totally deprived of air and exercise, say they who have read the ancient accounts of the Bastille, and even they whose curiosity has led them to visit it? for it is not withdrawn from the inspection of the curious. The Governor, although his mansion is without, often enters the prison to receive his visitors; and in the prison all

his colleagues, from the King's Lieutenant down to the very lowest Scullion, receive their's. On days of rejoicing, when there is a display of fire-works or illuminations, the public are permitted even in crowds to ascend the Towers, that they may thence behold the sight to advantage. On such occasions they reflect the very image of peace and tranquility. All these gaping strangers are in perfect ignorance of what passes, and of what is shut up, within those impenetrable vaults, the outsides of which they gaze on with admiration. Some one amongst them perhaps may tread on the sepulchre of his friend, his relation, his father; who thinks him two hundred leagues distant employed in his business, or engaged in his pleasures.

All, in short, who are favoured with this exterior examination, seeing a garden pretty large, platforms raised to a considerable elevation, where in consequence the air is pure and the view picturesque, and being assured that all this is in common allotted to the use of the prisoners, leave the Castle, fully persuaded, though the life in the Bastille may not be agreeable, yet that these alleviations render it supportable. This might have been the case formerly: I shall mention a fact that has happened lately.

The present Governor, named *De Launay*, is an ingenious man, and knows how to turn every

thing to the best advantage ; he considered, that the garden might afford a handsome addition to his income ; and for this purpose let it out for a certain annual stipend to a Gardener, who sells the roots and fruit that it produces : but, in order to make the better bargain, he thought it necessary to exclude the prisoners. A letter was therefore expedited, signed *Amelot*, which prohibited the prisoners from entering the garden.

With regard to the platforms of the Towers, though from their great elevation, it is impossible for any one to be recognized on them, or for him to recognize any one below ; yet as they directly overlook the *Rue St. Antoine*, from which the public are not yet banished, prisoners were never permitted heretofore to walk there, unless escorted by one of the jailors, either an officer or turn-key. It was, however, discovered of late, that is, within these three years, that this talk was both unprofitable and toilsome ; besides, that it afforded the prisoners an opportunity of conversing with the sentry. The vigilance of Mr. *De Launay* took the alarm : and partly in consideration of the ease of his colleagues, partly on account of the dangers he apprehended, a letter was dispatched, signed *Amelot*, which forbade the use of the platforms, as well as the garden.

All that remains then for walking in, is the Court of the castle. This is an oblong square,

ninety-six feet by sixty. The walls, by which it is surrounded, are one hundred feet high, without any aperture : so that it is in fact a large pit, where the cold is insupportable in winter, because the North wind rushes into it ; in summer it is no less so, because, there being no circulation of the air, the heat of the Sun makes it a very oven. Such is the sole *Lyceum*, where those among the prisoners, who are indulged with the privilege of walking, a privilege that is not granted to all, may for a few moments of the day disgorge the infected air of their habitations.

But it must not be supposed, that the act of tormenting, with which they keep their captives in misery, is suffered to relax during this transitory interval : for it may easily be conceived, how little they can enjoy walking in a place so circumscribed ; where there is no shelter from the rain ; where nothing but the inconveniences of the weather is experienced ; where with the appearance of a shadow of liberty, the centinels that surround them, the universal silence that prevails, and the sight of the clock, which is alone allowed to break that silence, present them with but too certain marks of slavery.

This particular may be worthy of a remark. The Clock of the Castle looks into the Court. It is covered with a handsome dial-plate : but, who would imagine the ornaments with which they

have thought proper to decorate it? Chains carved with much exactness, and highly finished. It is supported by two figures, bound by the hands, the feet and the waist: the two ends of this curious garland, after being carried all round the plate, return to form a prodigious knot in front; and, to signify that they menace both sexes alike, the Artist either inspired by the genius of the place, or else in pursuance of precise directions, has carefully made the distinction of a *male* and a *female*. Such is the spectacle, with which the eyes of a prisoner are regaled during his walk: a large inscription in letters of gold engraved on black marble informs him, that he is indebted for it to *M. Raymond Gualbert de SARTINES*. (30)

Yet do not imagine, that he enjoys as much of this as he could desire. The portion of time, that is allotted to each prisoner to view the sky, which he can do but in part, is measured out with the most œconomical exactness. This measure depends on the number of the confined. As one never enters till another is gone out, and as, thanks to the letters signed *Amelot*, this is the only funnel they are allowed to partake of, when the Bastille is full, the portion is very small. I perceived the arrival of a new guest, or of a new walker, by what was deducted from mine to contribute to his recreation.

But observe that you are not carried away with

the erroneous idea, that the enjoyment of this relief, thus modified, is peaceable and complete. This Court is the only passage to the kitchen, and to those parts where the Officers of the Castle receive their visitors; through it the purveyors of every kind, the workmen, &c. are obliged to pass. Now, as it is requisite, above all things, that a prisoner neither see, nor be seen; whenever a stranger approaches, he is obliged to fly into what is called the *closet*. This is an opening of twelve feet in length, and two wide, made in an antient vault. To this hole, which they term the *closet*, a prisoner must betake himself with precipitation, on the approach of so much as a man with a bundle of herbs; and he must be scrupulously careful to shut and fasten the door; for the smallest suspicion of curiosity would at least be punished with close imprisonment. This alternative will frequently occur: I have often reckoned in an hour, the term of duration for the very longest walk, three quarters of the hour consumed in that inactive and humiliating situation in the *closet*.

I know not whether this regulation is established by a letter signed *Amelot*; but sure I am, that it is of a recent date. Till of late years, no stranger was admitted into the Court after nine in the morning, without the most indispensable necessity: the provisions were ready prepared; visits were paid without; and the manœuvres of the *closet*

took place only on such occasions as might from their urgency seem to excuse it.

But that is not all : this walk itself, so insufficient, and so cruelly modified, as to be rendered rather an additional mortification, than a comfort, is suspended daily ; and that by the arbitrary will of the Governor. If a curious person has obtained permission to visit the prison ; if any repairs require the passage backward and forward of the workmen ; if the Governor gives a grand dinner, which must occasion the frequent passage of his servants, his kitchen being within, and his dwelling without ; for any one of these reasons the walk is prohibited.



